The Romantic Period

1708

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General Editor—ERNEST BERNBAUM

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

NELSON'S ENGLISH READINGS

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

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NELSON'S ENGLISH READINGS

VOLUME FIVE

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Selected and Edited by

ERNEST BERNBAUM

Professor of English
University of Illinois

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THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

Its Chronological Divisions. With few exceptions (Jane Austen being the most notable), the chief authors of the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth were Romantics. Their precursors, represented in our Volume IV, were Thomson, Young, Collins, Gray, Macpherson, Chatterton, Cowper, and Burns. The Romantic Movement rose to its heights during the period from c. 1783 to c. 1832. Most of the leading authors were active through nearly the entire extent of that period; but it may be sub-divided into two parts. The first is from c. 1783 to 1812, during which the most important works to appear were the poems of Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Scott. The second is from 1812 to 1832, during which the outstanding works were Scott's Waverley novels, the critical writings and the essays of Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey, the imaginary conversations of Landor, and the poems of Byron, Keats, and Shelley. In the latter period the young Carlyle also began his work; but since most of his famous writings appeared after 1832, the selections from him will be found in our Volume VI.

Its Importance. Today the Romantics may be admired or detested, but no one who is mentally or aesthetically awake can ignore them. For better or worse, the modern outlook is chiefly of their creation,—most of the literature of the last one hundred years being either an application of the romantic principles to new themes or a hostile reaction against them. To understand our cultural heritage and problems, we must know the Romantics.

Its General Character. Many have tried to define Romanticism, but in vain. Even as you cannot strictly define a human being, but only approximately characterize him; so you can only suggest some of the traits in which the great Romantics resembled one another. All of course had the literary power to create that particular style of poetry or prose which was, in each case, just the right medium for the expression of their thoughts and feelings; but this power has been the mark of literary genius in every age. All of the Romantics regarded literature and art as something much

more significant than a pleasant escape from a dreary life. All of them were keenly conscious of the contrast between two worlds. One was the world of ideal truth, goodness, and beauty: this was the only eternal, infinite, and absolutely real world, and it was accessible to us through the imagination. The other world was that of actual appearances, which to common sense was the only world, and which to the idealist was so obviously full of untruth, evil, and ugliness as to compel him to dejection or indignation. This state of the romantic mind is brilliantly expressed by Byron, and all the Romantics passed through it at times. Most of them, however, passed onward to the faith that the universe was not wholly or even predominantly evil, that it was in origin an emanation from the divinely ideal, that its apparent degradation was partly owing to the fact that heretofore men of mere common sense had imperciently interpreted, misguided, and misruled it, and that there still remained in it (discernible to the Imagination, and revealable by Literature) noble elements of truth, righteousness, and beauty. Hence, although a smug acceptance of all things as they are was fatuous, they believed that despair should be overcome; and that by sympathizing with certain aspects of nature, and with certain characteristics of man, we should achieve fortitude and wisdom. In short, most of the Romantics, after passing through the Valley of Dejection, found somewhere the possibilities of true happiness. Usually they found them in some aspect of man's environment, or in some aspect of his life, that had been unduly neglected by the eighteenth century of Pope and Dr. Johnson.

What the different sources and means of happiness were that the Romantics severally found, I have attempted to sketch below in the introductions to the individual authors.

WILLIAM BLAKE
1757-1827

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, little attention was paid to Blake. Today his reputation resembles that of a founder of a religious cult, and it is clear that he offers something which to the modern world is of fascinating interest. His devotees

maintain that it is his *Prophetic Books,* such as *Milton* and *Jerusalem,* that are of the profoundest value; but to the uninitiated beginner they seem too obscure. It is the lyrics of Blake's earlier period that are now accepted as true classics.

Blake was trained to be an engraver and artist. He had less formal schooling than any of the other great Romantics, —which partly accounts for the originality of his genius as well as for its eccentricity. If he had received a conventional education, he might have rejected as heretical or whimsical many of those theological and speculative books which he delighted to read. He was influenced by the mystical teachings of his father's religion,—Swedenborgianism; and he always firmly believed that he held intercourse with angels, prophets, and other "messengers from Heaven." His opinions on politics, morality, love, art, and literature were so contrary to those current that he was mistakenly thought insane. An "affectionate, enthusiastic, hope-fostered visionary," as he called himself, he cheerfully accepted poverty, never did anything inconsistent with his ideals, was diligently devoted to his artistic calling, and thus managed (more successfully than many tiresomely sane people) to find happiness.

To Blake the guide to truth was not the critical and sceptical reason, but the free imagination. The Religion of Imagination had two commandments: Be free, and Love all things. Between human nature freely and fully developed and the divine there was no distinction. If mankind were completely free, it would be completely good. Towards this goal of virtuous anarchy the American Revolution and the French Revolution were gigantic steps. Politicians, moralists, and theologians who feared liberty, supported restrictive laws and commandments, and imposed punishments in this world or the next, were enemies of true virtue. Since classical literature fostered ideas contrary to this faith in absolute liberty and individualism, it should not be imitated; a nobler model than Homer or Virgil was the New Testament. Greater even than Liberty was Love,—that bond of universal sympathy, charity, and pity which should unite rich and poor, old and young, mankind and all other creatures. Hence Blake dwelt with peculiar fondness upon the innocence of children, the pitifulness of their suffering, the wickedness of cruelty to animals, and the glory of forgiveness. On such subjects he sang with an exquisite and appealing melody, of a quality that had scarcely been heard in England since the seventeenth century.

The best work of Blake is confined to a few themes. He

does not command as wide a range as some of the great Romantics. Yet, when one considers both the sentiments and the style of his *Poetical Sketches* (1783), *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and *Songs of Experience* (1794), one inclines to think that the beginnings of the Romantic Movement may be seen in those poems quite as clearly as in Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

TO THE MUSES

Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceased;

Whether in Heaven ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea
Wandering in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry!

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoyed in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forced, the notes are few!

1783

THE DIVINE IMAGE

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our father dear;
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face;
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

1789

From SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."

So sung a little clod of clay,
Trodden with the cattle's feet,
But a pebble of the brook
Warbled out these metres meet:

"Love seeketh only self to please,
To bind another to its delight,

Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."

1794

HOLY THURSDAY

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,—
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are filled with thorns—
It is eternal winter there.

For where'er the sun does shine,
And where'er the rain does fall,
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appal.

1794

THE TIGER

Tiger! tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger! tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

1794

THE GARDEN OF LOVE

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this chapel were shut,
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love
That so many sweet flowers bore;

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tombstones where flowers should be;

And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

1794

From AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE

To see a World in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.

A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage.
A dove-house filled with doves and pigeons
Shudders hell through all its regions.
A dog starved at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the state.
A horse misused upon the road
Calls to Heaven for human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain does tear.
A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing.
The game-cock clipped and armed for fight
Does the rising sun affright.
Every wolf's and lion's howl
Raises from hell a human soul.
The wild deer, wandering here and there,
Keeps the human soul from care.
The lamb misused breeds public strife,
And yet forgives the butcher's knife.
The bat that flits at close of eve
Has left the brain that won't believe.
The owl that calls upon the night
Speaks the unbeliever's fright.

He who shall hurt the little wren
Shall never be beloved by men.
He who the ox to wrath has moved
Shall never be by woman loved.
The wanton boy that kills the fly
Shall feel the spider's enmity.
He who torments the chafer's sprite
Weaves a bower in endless night.
The caterpillar on the leaf
Repeats to thee thy mother's grief.
Kill not the moth nor butterfly,
For the Last Judgment draweth nigh.
He who shall train the horse to war
Shall never pass the polar bar.
The beggar's dog and widow's cat,
Feed them, and thou wilt grow fat.

. . . . . .

The babe that weeps the rod beneath
Writes revenge in realms of death.
The beggar's rags, fluttering in air,
Does to rags the heavens tear.
The soldier, armed with sword and gun,
Palsied strikes the summer's sun.
The poor man's farthing is worth more
Than all the gold on Afric's shore.
One mite wrung from the laborer's hands
Shall buy and sell the miser's lands:
Or, if protected from on high,
Does that whole nation sell and buy.
He who mocks the infant's faith
Shall be mocked in age and death.
He who shall teach the child to doubt
The rotting grave shall ne'er get out.
He who respects the infant's faith
Triumphs over hell and death.

c. 1803

From JERUSALEM

[TO THE DEISTS]

I saw a Monk of Charlemaine
  Arise before my sight:
I talked with the Grey Monk as we stood
  In beams of infernal light.

Gibbon arose with a lash of steel,
  And Voltaire with a racking wheel:
The schools, in clouds of learning rolled,
  Arose with war in iron and gold.

"Thou lazy Monk," they sound afar,
  "In vain condemning glorious war;
And in your cell you shall ever dwell:
  Rise, War, and bind him in his cell!"

The blood red ran from the Grey Monk's side,
  His hands and feet were wounded wide,
His body bent, his arms and knees
  Like to the roots of ancient trees.

When Satan first the black bow bent
  And the moral law from the Gospel rent,
He forged the law into a sword,
  And spilled the blood of mercy's Lord.

Titus! Constantine! Charlemaine!
  O Voltaire! Rousseau! Gibbon! Vain
Your Grecian mocks and Roman sword
  Against this image of his Lord!

For a tear is an intellectual thing;
  And a sigh is the sword of an angel king,

And the bitter groan of a martyr's woe
Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow.

1804–20

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
1772-1834

STRANGE seems the contrast between Coleridge's character, which was at times shockingly feeble, and his powers as a poet and critic, which were extraordinarily great. The son of a scholarly clergyman, he received a sound classical education at Christ's Hospital in London, and studied for about two years at Cambridge University; but up to the age of twenty-five he had lived in a visionary and vacillating manner, had drifted into an ill-advised marriage, and could point to no worthy achievement or fixed purpose. In the next four years (1798-1802), however, aided by the friendship of William Wordsworth and of Wordsworth's family, he found himself as a poet,—producing *The Ancient Mariner, France: An Ode, Love, Christabel,* and *Kubla Khan.* It was in these years that he and Sarah Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, fell in love with each other. This was the deepest passion of Coleridge's life (it inspired *Love*); but its hopelessness helped to render him, after his brief golden period as a poet, again wretched, unsettled, and ineffective. His health was poor, and the medical profession of his day was too ignorant to cure him. He took opium to gain relief from his pains, only to find its consequences worse than the disease. While in Germany he had abstained entirely from opium, alcoholic beverages, and protein foods; but the result was that he raised another demon,—insomnia. From the age of thirty to forty-three he was a slave to opium and alcohol, neglected his family, estranged his best friends, and fell into humiliating dependence upon charitable benefactors. Yet it was during this very period that he gave his celebrated series of lectures on Shakspere, Milton, etc.; in other words, it was from this wretched and conscience-tortured man, at the lowest point of his moral existence, that there issued some of the loftiest, wisest, and most humane criti-

cism of life and literature that has ever been bestowed upon the world.

At forty-three Coleridge took the step which saved him: he placed himself under the direction of a physician, James Gillman, whose residence at Highgate, London, became his home for the remaining nineteen years of his life. There he produced a number of prose works, including the *Biographia Literaria* (1816), and vainly attempted to compose a comprehensive treatise setting forth his entire philosophic system. His marvelous conversation,—learned, ingenious, and lofty,—attracted disciples, even the dour young Carlyle bearing witness to the sublimity of "one who, alone in these dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaping from the black materialism and revolutionary deluges, with 'God, Freedom, Immortality' still his: a king of men." When Coleridge died, his schoolfellow Charles Lamb lamented that he was gone who "was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations." And Wordsworth mourned him as "the most *wonderful* man he had ever known."

We read the poetry of Coleridge with a sense of awe, because it expresses the wonderful and eternal mystery of the interpenetration of good and evil, of spirit and matter. It seems at once strange and true: because in showing the effects of the supernatural upon beings like the Ancient Mariner and Christabel, Coleridge remains unerringly true to our common human nature. He had the power to evoke an atmosphere of mystery, wonder, and pathos; and his command over the appropriate diction, rhythm, and harmony was complete. Rationalism, which detests anything that evidences to the intermingling of the human and the spiritual, tries to find faults in Coleridge; but to the unsophisticated spirit of mankind his best poems will remain "a warm poetic joy."

As a critic, he pleaded for the imaginative use of the mind, in order that the essential nature of things might be revealed artistically. He opposed Wordsworth's naturalistic crotchet as to the superior value of rustic language, because culture and education are necessary to the perception and expression of things as they are. He disclosed the greatness of Shakspere more profoundly than any previous critic,—revealing Shakspere's exceptional grasp of the complexities of human existence and the amazing vitality of his characters. No one can attain to a full appreciation of Shakspere's wisdom who has not been guided by Coleridge's insight.

If the English romantics had organized themselves as a school of literature, Coleridge would logically have been

their leader; because he was the equal of any of them in the quality of his best poems, and because he understood their various tendencies more philosophically than they did.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

PART THE FIRST

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spellbound by the eye of the old sea-faring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship drawn by a storm toward the south pole.

"And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds, where no living thing was to be seen.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross:
Through the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine."

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

Part the Second

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither

departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates in their sore distress would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

Part the Third

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist:
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!

I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

And horror follows. For can it be a *ship* that comes onward without wind or tide?

The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered,
With broad and burning face.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud,)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres!

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun. The spectre-woman and her death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship. Like vessel, like crew!

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won, I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight within the courts of the sun.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark:
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising of the Moon,

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after another,

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,

Each turned his face with a ghastly
pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

His shipmates drop down dead.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

Part the Fourth

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.*

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him;

I fear thee, and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-
Guest!
This body dropt not down.

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

* For the last two lines of this stanza, I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the Autumn of 1797, that this Poem was planned, and in part composed.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie;
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his heart.

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

The spell begins to break.

Part the Fifth

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth sounds, and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;

And the rain poured down from one
black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on.

They groaned, they stirred, they all up-
rose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved
on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do:
They raised their limbs like lifeless
tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me."

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!

'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the Heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:

But not by the souls of the men, nor by dæmons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The lonesome Spirit from the south pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

Part the Sixth

FIRST VOICE

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

SECOND VOICE

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

SECOND VOICE

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:

For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

The curse is finally expiated.

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

And appear in their own forms of light.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:

I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light:

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

Part the Seventh

The Hermit of the Wood.

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see those sails
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)

I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are;
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

And to teach by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

1797–8 1798

LOVE

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leaned against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright:
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that, unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land;—

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—

And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;—

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye,
She fled to me and wept.

She half inclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

1799 1799

CHRISTABEL

Part the First

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock!
Tu—whit!——Tu—whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud:
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:

'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare:
Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were;
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

Mary mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel), And who art thou?

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness.

Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear,
Said Christabel, How camest thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.

The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.

They spurred amain, their steeds were white;
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)

Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak,
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand
And comforted fair Geraldine:
O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withal
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell,

Sir Leoline is weak in health
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth:
And I beseech your courtesy
This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle-array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in the moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.

Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And jealous of the listening air
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.
The silver lamp burns dead and dim;

But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?
Christabel answered—Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were!

But soon with altered voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—

Dear lady! it hath wildered you!
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright;
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countree.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befell,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.

Quoth Christabel, so let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;

Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs:
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the Maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah, wel-a-day!

And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

The Conclusion to Part the First

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

Part the Second

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day.

And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,

Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep

Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel,
"Now Heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom
Enter the Baron's presence room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth:
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face;
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage:
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,
He would proclaim it far and wide
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wronged the dame,
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court—that there and then

I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)
Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead the vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?"
The Baron said—His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw his Geraldine,
Had deemed her sure a thing divine,
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed,
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.
"Nay!
Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.
And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array,
And take thy lovely daughter home;
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array

White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And, by mine honor! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine—
—For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing:—
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell,
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be;
So strange a dream hath come to me:
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wondered what might ail the bird:
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree.

"And in my dream, methought, I went
To search out what might there be found:
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,

That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck,
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this self-same day,
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;

And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel—
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance!—
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance,
Stumbling on the unsteady ground—
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing, that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance,
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view—
As far as such a look could be,
In eyes so innocent and blue!

And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed,
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!"
She said; and more she could not say,
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died:
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And would'st thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
Dishonored thus in his old age;
Dishonored by his only child.
And all his hospitality
To the wronged daughter of his friend,
By more than woman's jealousy,

Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere—
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

The Conclusion to Part the Second

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks
That always finds and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

1798–1800 1816

KUBLA KHAN: OR, A VISION IN A DREAM

A Fragment

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
  Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

1798 1816

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
1770-1850

Next to Shakspere and Milton, Wordsworth is the greatest English poet; and more than they he expresses the most characteristic modern ideals of the English-speaking peoples. He represents our paradoxical or puzzling devotion to

both the natural and the mystical, to both the commonplace and the sublime. He represents our peculiar conception of liberty, national welfare, morality, duty, the ideal man, the ideal woman, good manners, the relation of nature to self-culture, the true pursuit of happiness, and other matters of profound importance. Not to know and to love Wordsworth is to be out of touch with the soul of our own Anglo-American world. He militates against two of our most dangerous tendencies,—the single-minded pursuit of wealth, and the ostentatious squandering thereof,—by revealing the beauty and happiness of plain living and high thinking.

His wisdom was dearly bought. During his last fifty years, when he was dwelling in the Lake country, his life was peaceful; but his youth was agitated by visionary plans, vain attempts, and grievous disappointments. By nature he was passionate and rebellious; and in his early twenties, after leaving Cambridge University, believing that nearly everything in the established order was wrong, he eagerly sought truth, liberty, and reform in radical doctrine and radical action. He was fascinated by the materialistic and anarchical theories of William Godwin. He went to France, fraternized with supporters of the French Revolution, and was disgusted with his own nation's reluctance to accept its principles. He fell in love with Annette Vallon, a Frenchwoman several years older than himself; by whom he had a daughter, Caroline. The political chaos of the time made a marriage ceremony between them impossible; but Wordsworth intended to marry Annette, and returned to France at the risk of his life, but was forced to flee back to England. Before he could join Annette again, war broke out between France and England,—a war which lasted so many years that their plans of marriage were relinquished. Wordsworth never concealed this youthful error from those who had the right to know it; and when, ten years later, he married Mary Hutchinson, she was informed. The Wordsworths remained on friendly terms with Annette and Caroline, and Wordsworth did what he could for them during the rest of his life.

The character of Wordsworth was further chastened by the disappointment of his hopes for the French Revolution, when France embarked upon a career of imperialistic conquest. He now, largely under the influence of Coleridge, ceased to be a revolutionary radical. This does not mean that he reacted to the other false extreme. Indeed one cause of his greatness lies in the fact that, after attaining to maturity and self-mastery, he continued sympathetically to understand the impatience and the questionings of youth.

He continued to believe in democracy, liberty, and the free pursuit of happiness. He remained an opponent of the thoughtlessly conventional in life and literature, as his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* shows. But henceforth he no longer believed that mankind could achieve its goal by political revolutions or materialistic philosophies.

What is fundamental in Wordsworth's views is not only his love of nature, but his idea that human life is a development. Men are not born good, nor can they suddenly achieve goodness: they may grow towards goodness, and consequently towards happiness. There are several stages in life, each of which has its rights and should be freely permitted to develop into the higher. In each stage our relation towards nature is different. In infancy (see *Tintern Abbey,* and elsewhere) we are a thoughtless part of nature; in youth we become passionately aware of its existence, and grow full of fancies concerning it; but not until maturity do we, by exercise of reason and imagination, really understand it. Finally, even higher than the stage of mature culture, we may at times have access to a mystical state, almost inexpressible, of harmony with it. Whatever prevents us from passing from infancy to maturity through these changing relationships towards nature is evil. The memories of each previous stage are a precious heritage to maturity.

In the *Prelude* Wordsworth illustrated his idea of development by recounting those incidents in his life which had contributed towards the formation of his mind and character. His message, though not blindly optimistic, was strong in fortitude; and the *Excursion* was designed as an encouraging revelation to those who had become pessimistic owing to the obvious evils and sorrows of life. Throughout his work, Wordsworth takes a middle ground between naturalism and idyllicism: he neither represents the world as devoid of beauty, truth, and goodness, nor does he invent purely fanciful places or characters to show forth beauty, truth, and goodness; he finds them in scenes and persons such as are known to us all. As Tennyson said of him, he gives us a sense of the permanent amid the transitory. He shows us that, to him who rightly lives and rightly feels, life, despite its pains, is full of beauty and delight.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,

In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

1798

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EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, wher'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

1798

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THE TABLES TURNED

An Evening Scene on the Same Subject

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect

Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

1798 1798

LINES

Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour.

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,

Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead

From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

July 13, 1798 1798

WE ARE SEVEN

——A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said:
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair:
—Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen."
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,

My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

1798 1800

"SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS"

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

1799 1800

"THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER"

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower

On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mold the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give

While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

1799 1800

"A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL"

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

1799 1800

MICHAEL

A Pastoral Poem

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they

Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,

And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,

Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labor did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.
Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,

Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.
Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,

Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.
And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipped
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;

And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.
But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?
Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.
While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had pressed upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,

Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and, if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"
At this the old man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;

And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme,
These two days, has been meat and drink to me
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep;
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;

And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.
Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him:—"My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part

Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.——After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come; they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived:
But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.

These fields were burthened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go."
At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou

May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."
The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.
A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself

To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.
There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is left

That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

Oct. 11–Dec. 9, 1800 1800

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armory of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspere spake; the faith and the morals hold
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

1802 or 1803 April 16, 1803

"MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD"

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man:
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

March 26, 1802 1807

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

1802 1807

WRITTEN IN LONDON

September, 1802

O Friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, oppressed,
To think that now our life is only dressed
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblessed:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

1802 1807

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

September 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

1802 1807

"IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE"

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;

And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

1802 1807

TO THE DAISY

With little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which Love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humor of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies dressed;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next—and instantly
The freak is over,

The shape will vanish—and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some fairy bold
In fight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee!

Bright *Flower!* for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

1802 1807

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands

Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

1803–1805 1807

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT"

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;

A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

1804 1807

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,

They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

1804 1807

ODE TO DUTY

["Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim."]

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:

Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

1805 1807

ODE

Intimations of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood

"The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn whereso'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see

The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;

The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride

The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,

That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never:
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;

Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

c. 1802–1806 1807

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;

Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labors good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire:
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,

Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

1805–1806 1807

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON"

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

1807

THE PRELUDE

Or, Growth of a Poet's Mind
An Autobiographical Poem

[CHILDHOOD IN THE COUNTRY]

(Prelude, Book 1)

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or starlight thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;

Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs

Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

"'TIS AGAINST THAT THAT WE ARE FIGHTING"

(Prelude, Book ix)

When we chanced
One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,
Who crept along, fitting her languid gait
Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands
Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
Of solitude, and at the sight my friend
In agitation said, "'Tis against *that*
That we are fighting," I with him believed
That a benignant spirit was abroad
Which might not be withstood, that poverty
Abject as this would in a little time
Be found no more, that we should see the earth
Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil,
All institutes forever blotted out
That legalized exclusion, empty pomp
Abolished, sensual state and cruel power,
Whether by edict of the one or few;
And finally, as sum and crown of all,
Should see the people having a strong hand
In framing their own laws; whence better days
To all mankind.

1798–1805 1850

From THE RECLUSE

[WORDSWORTH'S MESSAGE]

On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessèd consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all—
I sing:—"fit audience let me find though few!"
So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard—
In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form—

Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
My haunt, and the main region of my song
—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbor. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
—I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation:—and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too—
Theme this but little heard of among men—
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name

Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish:—this is our high argument.
—Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
Have their authentic comment; that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!—
Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets; upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
Shedding benignant influence, and secure
Itself from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with this
I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating; and who, and what he was—
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision;—when and where, and how he lived;
Be not this labor useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power!
Whose gracious favor is the primal source
Of all illumination—may my Life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts

Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!

1814

From THE EXCURSION, BOOK IV

[DESPONDENCY CURED BY COMMUNION WITH NATURE]

"As men from men
Do, in the constitution of their souls,
Differ, by mystery not to be explained;
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemned
Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame;
So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, attainable by all—
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
For you, assuredly, a hopeful road
Lies open: we have heard from you a voice
At every moment softened in its course
By tenderness of heart; have seen your eye,
Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us.—Your discourse this day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow
In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
Of death and night, has caught at every turn
The colors of the sun. Access for you
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
Which the imaginative Will upholds
In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
By the inferior faculty that molds,
With her minute and speculative pains,
Opinion, ever changing!

I have seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore, and worship, when you know it not;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought;
Devout above the meaning of your will.
—Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the heart.
Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
At night's approach bring down the unclouded sky,
To rest upon their circumambient walls;
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems—choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal! What if these
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never chant

Her vespers—Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams: and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—
An iron knell! with echoes from afar
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered!
But descending
From these imaginative heights, that yield
Far-stretching views into eternity,
Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power
Your cherished sullenness is forced to bend
Even here, where her amenities are sown
With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
To range her blooming bowers, and spacious fields,
Where on the labors of the happy throng
She smiles, including in her wide embrace
City, and town, and tower, and sea with ships
Sprinkled; be our companion while we track
Her rivers populous with gliding life;
While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march,
Or pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
In peace and meditative cheerfulness;
Where living things, and things inanimate,

Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,
And speak to social reason's inner sense,
With inarticulate language.
For, the man—
Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down;
A holy tenderness pervade his frame.
His sanity of reason not impaired,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks—
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name; and, if he hear,
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate; and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love."

1795–1814 1814

TO A SKY-LARK

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!
Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;

Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!
1825 1827

PREFACE TO THE "LYRICAL BALLADS"

(Second Edition)

The principal object, then, proposed in these poems, was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect, and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of

nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appears to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust), because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical, language than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets, who think that they are conferring honor upon themselves and their art in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites of their own creation.[1]

. . . . . .

The reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes, and are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavored utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which writers in meter seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished

[1] It is worth while here to observe that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language, pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

to keep the reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men; and, further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write than by informing him that I have at all times endeavored to look steadily at my subject; consequently there is, I hope, in these poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry—namely, good sense; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

. . . . . .

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. . . .

Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science. Emphatically may it be said of the poet, as Shakspere hath said of man, that "he looks before and after." He is the rock of defense for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed, the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labors of men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries

of the chemist, the botanist, or mineralogist will be as proper objects of the poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the being thus produced as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man. It is not, then, to be supposed that anyone who holds that sublime notion of poetry which I have attempted to convey will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavor to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject. . . . Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated, till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment.

1800 1802

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
(PROSE)

On the significance of these selections from Coleridge's prose, see, above, p. 21, the Introduction to his work.

From BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

The poet, described in *ideal* perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control (*laxis effertur habenis*) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry. "Doubtless," as Sir John Davies observes of the soul (and his words may with slight alteration be applied, and even more appropriately, to the poetic imagination),—

Doubtless this could not be, but that she turns
Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange,
As fire converts to fire the things it burns,
As we our food into our nature change.

From their gross matter she abstracts their forms,
And draws a kind of quintessence from things;
Which to her proper nature she transforms,
To bear them light on her celestial wings.

Thus does she, when from individual states
She doth abstract the universal kinds;
Which then re-clothed in divers names and fates
Steal access through the senses to our minds.

Finally, good sense is the body of poetic genius, fancy its drapery, motion its life, and imagination the soul that is everywhere, and in each; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole. . . .

My own differences from certain supposed parts of Mr. Wordsworth's theory ground themselves on the assumption that his words had been rightly interpreted, as purporting that the proper diction for poetry in general consists altogether in a language taken, with due exceptions, from the mouths of men in real life, a language which actually constitutes the natural conversation of men under the influence of natural feelings. My objection is, first, that in *any* sense this rule is applicable only to *certain* classes of poetry; secondly, that even to these classes it is not applicable, except in such a sense, as hath never by any one (as far as I know or have read) been denied or doubted; and lastly, that as far as, and in that degree in which it is *practicable,* yet, as a *rule,* it is useless, if not injurious, and therefore either need not or ought not to be practised. The poet informs his reader that he had generally chosen *low*

and rustic life; but not *as* low and rustic, or in order to repeat that pleasure of doubtful moral effect, which persons of elevated rank and of superior refinement oftentimes derive from a happy *imitation* of the rude unpolished manners and discourse of their inferiors. For the pleasure so derived may be traced to three exciting causes. The first is the naturalness, in *fact,* of the things represented. The second is the apparent naturalness of the *representation,* as raised and qualified by an imperceptible infusion of the author's own knowledge and talent, which infusion does, indeed, constitute it an *imitation* as distinguished from a mere *copy.* The third cause may be found in the reader's conscious feeling of his superiority, awakened by the contrast presented to him; even as for the same purpose the kings and great barons of yore retained sometimes *actual* clowns and fools, but more frequently shrewd and witty fellows in that *character.* These, however, were not Mr. Wordsworth's objects. *He* chose low and rustic life, "because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil, in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and consequently may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature."

Now it is clear to me that in the most interesting of the poems, in which the author is more or less dramatic, as *The Brothers, Michael, Ruth, The Mad*

Mother, etc., the persons introduced are by no means taken *from low or rustic life* in the common acceptation of those words; and it is not less clear that the sentiments and language, as far as they can be conceived to have been really transferred from the minds and conversation of such persons, are attributable to causes and circumstances not necessarily connected with "their occupations and abode." The thoughts, feelings, language, and manners of the shepherd-farmers in the vales of Cumberland and Westmoreland, as far as they are actually adopted in those poems, may be accounted for from causes, which will and do produce the same results in *every* state of life, whether in town or country. As the two principal I rank that independence which raises a man above servitude, or daily toil for the profit of others, yet not above the necessity of industry and a frugal simplicity of domestic life; and the accompanying unambitious, but solid and religious, education which has rendered few books familiar but the Bible and the liturgy or hymn book. To this latter cause, indeed, which is so far *accidental* that it is the blessing of particular countries and a particular age, not the product of particular places or employments, the poet owes the show of probability, that his personages might really feel, think, and talk with any tolerable resemblance to his representation. It is an excellent remark of Dr. Henry More's, (*Enthusiasmus Triumpatus,* Sec. xxxv.), that "a man of confined education, but of good parts, by constant reading of the Bible, will naturally form a more winning and commanding rhetoric than those that are learned, the intermixture of tongues and of artificial phrases debasing *their* style."

It is, moreover, to be considered that to the formation of healthy feelings and a reflecting mind, *negations* involve impediments not less formidable

than sophistication and vicious intermixture. I am convinced that for the human soul to prosper in rustic life a certain vantage-ground is prerequisite. It is not every man that is likely to be improved by a country life or by country labors. Education, or original sensibility, or both, must pre-exist, if the changes, forms, and incidents of nature are to prove a sufficient stimulant. And where these are not sufficient, the mind contracts and hardens by want of stimulants; and the man becomes selfish, sensual, gross, and hard-hearted. Let the management of the Poor Laws in Liverpool, Manchester, or Bristol be compared with the ordinary dispensation of the poor rates in agricultural villages, where the *farmers* are the overseers and guardians of the poor. If my own experience have not been particularly unfortunate, as well as that of the many respectable country clergymen with whom I have conversed on the subject, the result would engender more than skepticism concerning the desirable influences of low and rustic life in and for itself. Whatever may be concluded on the other side, from the stronger local attachments and enterprising spirit of the Swiss, and other mountaineers, applies to a particular mode of pastoral life, under forms of property that permit and beget manners truly republican, not to rustic life in general, or to the absence of artificial cultivation. On the contrary, the mountaineers, whose manners have been so often eulogized, are in general better educated and greater readers than men of equal rank elsewhere. But where this is not the case, as among the peasantry of North Wales, the ancient mountains, with all their terrors and all their glories, are pictures to the blind, and music to the deaf.

I should not have entered so much into detail upon this passage, but here seems to be the point

to which all the lines of difference converge as to their source and center. (I mean, as far as, and in whatever respect, my poetic creed *does* differ from the doctrines promulgated in this preface.) I adopt with full faith the principle of Aristotle, that poetry as poetry is essentially *ideal,* that it avoids and excludes all *accident;* that its apparent individualities of rank, character, or occupation must be *representative* of a class; and that the *persons* of poetry must be clothed with *generic* attributes, with the *common* attributes of the class; not with such as one gifted individual might *possibly* possess, but such as from his situation it is most probable before-hand that he *would* possess. If my premises are right and my deductions legitimate, it follows that there can be no *poetic* medium between the swains of Theocritus and those of an imaginary golden age.

The characters of the vicar and the shepherd-mariner in the poem of *The Brothers,* and that of the shepherd of Greenhead Ghyll in the *Michael,* have all the verisimilitude and representative quality that the purposes of poetry can require. They are persons of a known and abiding class, and their manners and sentiments the natural product of circumstances common to the class.

1815–16 1817

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAKSPERE'S DRAMAS

The Greeks were polytheists; their religion was local; almost the only object of all their knowledge, art, and taste, was their god; and, accordingly, their productions were, if the expression may be allowed, statuesque, whilst those of the moderns are picturesque. The Greeks reared a structure, which, in its parts, and as a whole, filled the mind with the calm

and elevated impression of perfect beauty, and symmetrical proportion. The moderns also produced a whole—a more striking whole; but it was by blending materials and fusing the parts together. And as the Pantheon is to York Minster or Westminster Abbey, so is Sophocles compared with Shakspere; in the one a completeness, a satisfaction, an excellence, on which the mind rests with complacency; in the other a multitude of interlaced materials, great and little, magnificent and mean, accompanied, indeed, with the sense of a falling short of perfection, and yet, at the same time, so promising of our social and individual progression, that we would not, if we could, exchange it for that repose of the mind which dwells on the forms of symmetry in the acquiescent admiration of grace. This general characteristic of the ancient and modern drama might be illustrated by a parallel of the ancient and modern music;—the one consisting of melody arising from a succession only of pleasing sounds,—the modern embracing harmony also, the result of combination, and the effect of a whole.

I have said, and I say it again, that great as was the genius of Shakspere, his judgment was at least equal to it. Of this any one will be convinced, who attentively considers those points in which the dramas of Greece and England differ, from the dissimilitude of circumstances by which each was modified and influenced. The Greek stage had its origin in the ceremonies of a sacrifice, such as of the goat to Bacchus, whom we most erroneously regard as merely the jolly god of wine;—for among the ancients he was venerable, as the symbol of that power which acts without our consciousness in the vital energies of nature—the *vinum mundi*—as Apollo was that of the conscious agency of our intellectual being. The heroes of old, under the in-

fluences of this Bacchic enthusiasm, performed more than human actions; hence tales of the favorite champions soon passed into dialogue. On the Greek stage the chorus was always before the audience; the curtain was never dropped, as we should say; and change of place being therefore, in general, impossible, the absurd notion of condemning it merely as improbable in itself was never entertained by any one. If we can believe ourselves at Thebes in one act, we may believe ourselves at Athens in the next. If a story lasts twenty-four hours or twenty-four years, it is equally improbable. There seems to be no just boundary but what the feelings prescribe. But on the Greek stage, where the same persons were perpetually before the audience, great judgment was necessary in venturing on any such change. The poets never, therefore, attempted to impose on the senses by bringing places to men, but they did bring men to places, as in the well-known instance in the *Eumenides,* where, during an evident retirement of the chorus from the orchestra, the scene is changed to Athens, and Orestes is first introduced in the temple of Minerva, and the chorus of Furies come in afterwards in pursuit of him.

In the Greek drama there were no formal divisions into scenes and acts; there were no means, therefore, of allowing for the necessary lapse of time between one part of the dialogue and another, and unity of time in a strict sense was, of course, impossible. To overcome that difficulty of accounting for time, which is effected on the modern stage by dropping a curtain, the judgment and great genius of the ancients supplied music and measured motion, and with the lyric ode filled up the vacuity. In the story of the Agamemnon of Æschylus, the capture of Troy is supposed to be announced by a fire lighted on the Asiatic shore, and the transmission

of the signal by successive beacons to Mycenæ. The signal is first seen at the 21st line, and the herald from Troy itself enters at the 486th, and Agamemnon himself at the 783rd line. But the practical absurdity of this was not felt by the audience, who, in imagination stretched minutes into hours, while they listened to the lofty narrative odes of the chorus which almost entirely filled up the interspace. Another fact deserves attention here, namely, that regularly on the Greek stage a drama, or acted story, consisted in reality of three dramas, called together a trilogy, and performed consecutively in the course of one day. Now you may conceive a tragedy of Shakspere's as a trilogy connected in one single representation. Divide *Lear* into three parts, and each would be a play with the ancients; or take the three Æschylean dramas of *Agamemnon,* and divide them into, or call them, as many acts, and they together would be one play. The first act would comprise the usurpation of Ægisthus, and the murder of Agamemnon; the second, the revenge of Orestes, and the murder of his mother; and the third, the penance and absolution of Orestes;—occupying a period of twenty-two years.

The stage in Shakspere's time was a naked room with a blanket for a curtain; but he made it a field for monarchs. That law of unity, which has its foundations, not in the factitious necessity of custom, but in nature itself, the unity of feeling, is everywhere and at all times observed by Shakspere in his plays. Read *Romeo and Juliet;*—all is youth and spring;—youth with its follies, its virtues, its precipitancies;—youth with its odors, its flowers, and its transiency; it is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play. The old men, the Capulets and Montagues, are not common old men; they have an eagerness, a heartiness,

a vehemence, the effect of spring; with Romeo, his change of passion, his sudden marriage, and his rash death, are all the effects of youth;—whilst in Juliet love has all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of spring; but it ends with a long deep sigh like the last breeze of the Italian evening. This unity of feeling and character pervades every drama of Shakspere.

It seems to me that his plays are distinguished from those of all other dramatic poets by the following characteristics:—

1. Expectation in preference to surprise. It is like the true reading of the passage—"God said, Let there be light, and there was *light*;"—not, "there *was* light." As the feeling with which we startle at a shooting star compared with that of watching the sunrise at the pre-established moment, such and so low is surprise compared with expectation.

2. Signal adherence to the great law of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other. Passion in Shakspere generally displays libertinism, but involves morality; and if there are exceptions to this, they are, independently of their intrinsic value, all of them indicative of individual character, and, like the farewell admonitions of a parent, have an end beyond the parental relation. Thus the Countess's beautiful precepts to Bertram, by elevating her character, raise that of Helena her favorite, and soften down the point in her which Shakspere does not mean us not to see, but to see and to forgive, and at length to justify. And so it is in Polonius, who is the personified memory of wisdom no longer actually possessed. This admirable character is always misrepresented on the stage. Shakspere never intended to exhibit him as a buffoon; for although it was natural that Hamlet—

a young man of fire and genius, detesting formality, and disliking Polonius on political grounds, as imagining that he had assisted his uncle in his usurpation—should express himself satirically, yet this must not be taken as exactly the poet's conception of him. In Polonius a certain induration of character had arisen from long habits of business; but take his advice to Laertes, and Ophelia's reverence for his memory, and we shall see that he was meant to be represented as a statesman somewhat past his faculties,—his recollections of life all full of wisdom, and showing a knowledge of human nature, whilst what immediately takes place before him and escapes from him, is indicative of weakness.

But as in Homer all the deities are in armor, even Venus, so in Shakspere all the characters are strong. Hence real folly and dulness are made by him the vehicles of wisdom. There is no difficulty for one being a fool to imitate a fool; but to be, remain, and speak like a wise man and a great wit, and yet so as to give a vivid representation of a veritable fool,—*hic labor, hoc opus est.* A drunken constable is not uncommon, nor hard to draw; but see and examine what goes to make up a Dogberry.

3. Keeping at all times in the high road of life. Shakspere has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vice; he never renders that amiable which religion and reason alike teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue, like Beaumont and Fletcher, the Kotzebues of the day. Shakspere's fathers are roused by ingratitude, his husbands stung by unfaithfulness; in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may, nay, must, feel. Let the morality of Shakspere be contrasted with that of the writers of his own, or the succeeding age, or of those of the present day, who boast their superiority in

this respect. No one can dispute that the result of such a comparison is altogether in favor of Shakspere;—even the letters of women of high rank in his age were often coarser than his writings. If he occasionally disgusts a keen sense of delicacy, he never injures the mind; he neither excites, nor flatters, passion, in order to degrade the subject of it; he does not use the faulty thing for a faulty purpose, nor carries on warfare against virtue, by causing wickedness to appear as no wickedness, through the medium of a morbid sympathy with the unfortunate. In Shakspere vice never walks as in twilight; nothing is purposely out of place;—he inverts not the order of nature and propriety,—does not make every magistrate a drunkard or glutton, nor every poor man meek, humane, and temperate; he has no benevolent butchers, or sentimental rat-catchers.

4. Independence of the dramatic interest on the plot. The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa,* as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvas and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedick and Beatrice,—the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the *Much Ado About Nothing* all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action;—take away Benedick, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero,—and what will remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character; in Shakspere it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated, or not

calculated, to form the plot. Don John is the main-spring of the plot of this play; but he is merely shown and then withdrawn.

5. Independence of the interest on the story as the ground-work of the plot. Hence Shakspere never took the trouble of inventing stories. It was enough for him to select from those that had been already invented or recorded such as had one or other, or both of two recommendations, namely, suitableness to his particular purpose, and their being parts of popular tradition,—names of which we had often heard, and of their fortunes, and as to which all we wanted was, to see the man himself. So it is just the man himself—the Lear, the Shylock, the Richard—that Shakspere makes us for the first time acquainted with. Omit the first scene in *Lear*, and yet everything will remain; so the first and second scenes in *The Merchant of Venice*. Indeed it is universally true,

6. Interfusion of the lyrical—that which in its very essence is poetical—not only with the dramatic, as in the plays of Metastasio, where at the end of the scene comes the *aria* as the *exit* speech of the character,—but also in and through the dramatic. Songs in Shakspere are introduced as songs only, just as songs are in real life, beautifully as some of them are characteristic of the person who had sung or called for them, as Desdemona's "Willow," and Ophelia's wild snatches, and the sweet carolings in *As You Like It*. But the whole of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* is one continued specimen of the dramatized lyrical. And observe how exquisitely the dramatic of Hotspur;—

> Marry, and I'm glad on't with all my heart;
> I'd rather be a kitten and cry mew, etc.

melts away into the lyric of Mortimer;—

I understand thy looks; that pretty Welsh
Which thou pour'st down from these swelling heavens,
I am too perfect in, etc.

Henry IV, part i, act iii, sc. i.

7. The characters of the *dramatis personæ,* like those in real life, are to be inferred by the reader;—they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakspere's characters, like those in real life, are very commonly misunderstood, and almost always understood by different persons in different ways. The causes are the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the character say, you may be deceived, and still more so, if that which his enemies say; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together, not omitting a shrewd hint from the clown or the fool, and perhaps your impression will be right; and you may know whether you have in fact discovered the poet's own idea, by all the speeches receiving light from it, and attesting its reality by reflecting it.

Lastly, in Shakspere the heterogeneous is united, as it is in nature. You must not suppose a pressure or passion always acting on or in the character:—passion in Shakspere is that by which the individual is distinguished from others, not that which makes a different kind of him. Shakspere followed the main march of the human affections. He entered into no analysis of the passions or faiths of men, but assured himself that such and such passions and faiths were grounded in our common nature, and not in the mere accidents of ignorance or disease.

This is an important consideration, and constitutes our Shakspere the morning star, the guide and the pioneer, of true philosophy.

1818

CHARLES LAMB
1775-1834

It was Coleridge that Wordsworth praised as "the most *wonderful* man he had ever known"; but it was to Lamb that he paid the tribute:

O, he was *good*, if e'er a good man lived!

Few of those who read the apparently light-hearted essays which began to appear in the *London Magazine* of 1820 could have guessed the thwarting and tragic circumstances of Lamb's life. Born in London, the son of a law-clerk, Lamb's schooling (at Christ's Hospital) had ended at fourteen, his means not permitting him to gratify his studious cravings by going to college. The dark cloud of hereditary insanity hung over his family. Lamb himself at twenty was temporarily afflicted; and his beloved sister Mary, one frightful day in 1796, in a violent fit of madness, slew their mother. Although Mary recovered from that attack, she was subject to occasional recurrences of insanity. Charles, unaided by those who should have helped him, met this situation with quiet heroism, refusing to let Mary be confined permanently, shouldering all responsibility for her, and watching over her until his death. Until he was fifty, he drudged faithfully at the distasteful work of a clerk in the offices of the East India Company. Yet despite the scantiness of his leisure and the burden of his anxieties, he achieved a rare degree of culture and became one of the master-essayists of our literature. Personally he is the most beloved of the great Romantics.

Wordsworth disclosed the satisfactions of the simple life lived in the country; Lamb disclosed how happily that life may be lived, even with modest means, in the city. He showed what delight there was in books, reading, play-going, evenings by one's fireside or at one's library-table.

A gourmet (not a glutton), he could make even cookery romantic,—a joyous and wonderworking craft. He left high seriousness to others,—to Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Carlyle; but he supplies us what they lack, and our lives would be gloomier without the illumination which, in a whimsical and humorous manner, he casts upon the lesser arts of life and upon the graces of character.

LETTER TO WORDSWORTH

Thanks for your letter and present. I had already borrowed your second volume. What most please me are the "Song of Lucy"—*Simon's sickly daughter* in "The Sexton" made me *cry*. Next to these are the description of the continuous echoes in the story of Joanna's laugh, where the mountains and all the scenery absolutely seem alive—and that fine Shaksperian character of the happy man, in *The Brothers,*

> —that creeps about the fields,
> Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
> Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
> Into his face, *until the setting sun*
> *Write fool upon his forehead.*

I will mention one more: the delicate and curious feeling in the wish for the Cumberland Beggar, that he may have about him the melody of birds, altho' he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feelings for the Beggar's, and, in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish.—"The Poet's Epitaph" is disfigured, to my taste, by the vulgar satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of pin point in the sixth stanza. All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the Beggar that the instructions conveyed

in it are too direct and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told: I will teach you how to think upon this subject. This fault, if I am right, is in a ten-thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne and many many novelists and modern poets, who continually put a sign post up to show where you are to feel. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid. Very different from *Robinson Crusoe, The Vicar of Wakefield, Roderick Random,* and other beautiful bare narratives. There is implied an unwritten compact between author and reader: I will tell you a story, and I suppose you will understand it. Modern novels, *St. Leons* and the like, are full of such flowers as these: "Let not my reader suppose"—"Imagine, *if you can*"—modest!—etc.—I will here have done with praise and blame. I have written so much, only that you may not think I have passed over your book without observation.—I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his "Ancient Mariner" "a Poet's Reverie"—it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a lion but only the scenical representation of a lion. What new idea is gained by this title, but one subversive of all credit, which the tale should force upon us, of its truth? For me, I was never so affected with any human tale. After first reading it, I was totally possessed with it for many days—I dislike all the miraculous part of it, but the feelings of the man under the operation of such scenery dragged me along like Tom Piper's magic whistle. I totally differ from your idea that the Mariner should have had a character and profession. This is a beauty in *Gulliver's Travels,* where the mind is kept in a placid state of little wonderments; but the Ancient Mariner undergoes such trials as overwhelm and bury all

individuality or memory of what he was, like the state of a man in a bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is that all consciousness of personality is gone. Your other observation is, I think, as well a little unfounded: the Mariner from being conversant in supernatural events *has* acquired a supernatural and strange cast of *phrase,* eye, appearance, etc., which frighten the wedding guest. You will excuse my remarks, because I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary with a prose apology to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see. To sum up a general opinion of the second vol.—I do not feel any one poem in it so forcibly as *The Ancient Mariner, The Mad Mother* and the *Lines at Tintern Abbey,* in the first.—I could, too, have wished the critical preface had appeared in a separate treatise. All its dogmas are true and just, and most of them new, *as* criticism. But they associate a *diminishing* idea with the poems which follow, as having been written for *experiment* on the public taste, more than having sprung (as they must have done) from living and daily circumstances.—I am prolix, because I am gratified in the opportunity of writing to you, and I don't well know when to leave off. I ought before this to have reply'd to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang anywhere; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead Nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, wagons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden;

the very women of the Town; the watchman, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print shops, the old book stalls, parsons cheap'ning books, coffee houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you. So are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books) to groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about (like a faithful dog, only exceeding him in knowledge), wherever I have moved, old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of anything. Your sun and moon and skies and hills and lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof, beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy my mind; and at

last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh and green, and warm are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.

Give my kindest love *and my sister's* to D. and yourself, and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite. Thank you for liking my play.

C. Lamb

1801

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his *Mundane Mutations,* where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cook's Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swineherd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cot-

tage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed, this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he

fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with terror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord!"—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers,

as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any

manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision: and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance-offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt,* as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later; I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis,* I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum.*

I speak not of your grown porkers—things be-

tween pig and pork—those hobbledehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ,* the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble—the mild forerunner, or *præludium,* of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavor comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling,* as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat!—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result or common substance.

Behold him while he is doing—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string!—Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age! he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars.—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of

filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

> Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care ——

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapors. Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her—like lovers' kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbors' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which

fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind), to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavors, to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house, slightingly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what), a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate.—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London bridge) a gray-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure

my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present! —and the odor of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old gray impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipped to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto.—

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavor of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) super-added a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a

few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of wild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shallots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

1822

OLD CHINA

I have an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture-gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that, under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old-fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon), some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favorable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to overshade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

"I wish the good old times would come again," she said, "when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state"—so she was pleased to ramble on,—"in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and,

O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!)—we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against,* and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating,* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical—give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford

to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the *'Lady Blanch';* when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holiday—holiday and all other fun are gone now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a-fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom, moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the Battle of Hexham, and the Surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood—when we squeezed out our shillings apiece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in, indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough—but there was still a law of civility to women recognized to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too,

well enough then—but sight and all I think is gone with our poverty.

"There was pleasure in eating strawberries before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves, in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never *do* make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet,—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then,—betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss,

and in conclusion, with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton,* as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of a poor —— hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth; a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formerly walked: live better and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one-shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside,

sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe,* which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Crœsus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half Madonnaish chit of lady in that very blue summer-house."

1823

ON THE POPULAR FALLACY THAT WE SHOULD LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB

We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to these woolly bed-fellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes, and sleep if he can. Man found out long sixes.— Hail candlelight! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindliest luminary of the three—if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon! —We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep, by candle-light. They are everybody's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unil-

lumined fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed, when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbor's cheek to be sure that he understood it? This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry. It has a somber cast (try Hesiod or Ossian), derived from the tradition of those unlanterned nights. Jokes came in with candles. We wonder how they saw to pick up a pin, if they had any. How did they sup? what a melange of chance carving they must have made of it!—here one had got the leg of a goat, when he wanted a horse's shoulder—there another had dipped his scooped palm in a kid-skin of wild honey, when he meditated right mare's milk. There is neither good eating nor drinking in fresco. Who, even in these civilized times, has never experienced this, when at some economic table he has commenced dining after dusk, and waited for the flavor till the lights came? The senses absolutely give and take reciprocally. Can you tell pork from veal in the dark? or distinguish Sherris from pure Malaga? Take away the candle from the smoking man; by the glimmering of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking, but he knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma. Then how he redoubles his puffs! how he burnishes! —There is absolutely no such thing as reading, but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noonday in gardens, and in sultry arbors; but it was labor thrown away. Those gay motes in the beam come about you, hovering and teasing, like many coquettes, that will have you all to their self, and are jealous of your abstractions. By the midnight taper, the writer digests his meditations. By the same light, we must approach to their perusal,

if we would catch the flame, the odor. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phœbus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. They are abstracted works—

Things that were born, when none but the still night,
And his dumb candle, saw his pinching throes.

Marry, daylight—daylight might furnish the images, the crude material; but for the fine shapings, the true turning and filing (as mine author hath it), they must be content to hold their inspiration of the candle. The mild internal light, that reveals them, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Night and silence call out the starry fancies. Milton's Morning Hymn in Paradise, we would hold a good wager, was penned at midnight, and Taylor's rich description of a sunrise smells decidedly of the taper. Even ourselves, in these our humbler lucubrations, tune our best measured cadences (Prose has her cadences) not unfrequently to the charm of the drowsier watchman, "blessing the doors"; or the wild sweeps of wind at midnight. Even now a loftier speculation than we have yet attempted, courts our endeavors. We would indite something about the Solar System.—*Betty, bring the candles.*

1826

WILLIAM HAZLITT
1778-1830

If Coleridge was the profoundest theorist among our critics, Hazlitt was the greatest practitioner. In essays filling many volumes, he applied the principles of romanticism to innumerable authors and books, covering more ground than

Coleridge, Lamb, or even De Quincey. He wrote upon almost every important author from Elizabethan times to his own age, and there is no survey of English literature that gives us a more valuable series of critical judgments than Hazlitt provides.

He combined sensitive feelings with a vigorous mind. His life was stormy and full of disappointments. He made an unsuitable marriage, fell in love with a physically beautiful servant-girl, who proved unfaithful to him, was divorced from his first wife, and was deserted by his second. Disillusion too was the final result of his ardent interest in liberty. Educated in a sectarian school which exalted liberalism in politics and theology, he hoped for the overthrow, through Napoleon especially, of the old régime; and he was embittered by the conservative reaction which triumphed after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo (1815). Hence his occasional cynicism,—a prose-variant of Byron's; hence too that sympathy with melancholy which spoke sublimely in his characterization of Hamlet. His few positive errors occurred when he was blinded by political partisanship.

Life taught Hazlitt something of the complexity of human nature and of the intermixture of good and bad motives; and he raised the standards of literary judgment by insisting that, to be great (like Shakspere), an author must portray those complexities, and a critic must discern them. Eighteenth-century criticism, he complained, saw merely those features of a work which lay on the surface or were measurable by formal analysis: Dr. Johnson, he boldly asserted, "could not show how the nature of man was modified by the workings of passion, or the infinite fluctuations of thought and accident." "A genuine criticism," said Hazlitt, "should reflect the colors, the light and shade, the soul and body of a work,"—not the body only.

Few critics can describe a work *in its entirety,* and in its *total* effect upon us, as well as Hazlitt can; for with sensitiveness, gusto, and subtlety, he combined lucidity. He practised that "unaffected" familiar style which he recommended. "We are fine fellows," said Robert Louis Stevenson, "but we can't write like William Hazlitt."

From MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH POETS

My father was a Dissenting Minister, at W——m, in Shropshire; and in the year 1798 (the figures

that compose that date are to me like the "dreaded name of Demogorgon") Mr. Coleridge came to Shrewsbury, to succeed Mr. Rowe in the spiritual charge of a Unitarian congregation there. He did not come till late on the Saturday afternoon before he was to preach; and Mr. Rowe, who himself went down to the coach, in a state of anxiety and expectation, to look for the arrival of his successor, could find no one at all answering the description but a round-faced man, in a short black coat (like a shooting jacket) which hardly seemed to have been made for him, but who seemed to be talking at a great rate to his fellow-passengers. Mr. Rowe had scarce returned to give an account of his disappointment, when the round-faced man in black entered, and dissipated all doubts on the subject, by beginning to talk. He did not cease while he stayed; nor has he since, that I know of. He held the good town of Shrewsbury in delightful suspense for three weeks that he remained there, "fluttering the *proud Salopians,* like an eagle in a dove-cote"; and the Welsh mountains that skirt the horizon with their tempestuous confusion, agree to have heard no such mystic sounds since the days of

High-born Hoel's harp or soft Llewellyn's lay!

As we passed along between W—m and Shrewsbury, and I eyed their blue tops seen through the wintry branches, or the red rustling leaves of the sturdy oak-trees by the road-side, a sound was in my ears as of a Siren's song; I was stunned, startled with it, as from deep sleep; but I had no notion then that I should ever be able to express my admiration to others in motley imagery or quaint allusion, till the light of his genius shone into my soul, like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road.

I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the way-side, crushed, bleeding, lifeless; but now, bursting from the deadly bands that bound them,

> With Styx nine times round them,

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes, catch the golden light of other years. My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge. But this is not to my purpose.

My father lived ten miles from Shrewsbury, and was in the habit of exchanging visits with Mr. Rowe, and with Mr. Jenkins of Whitchurch (nine miles farther on) according to the custom of Dissenting Ministers in each other's neighborhood. A line of communication is thus established, by which the flame of civil and religious liberty is kept alive, and nourishes its smoldering fire unquenchable, like the fires in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, placed at different stations, that waited for ten long years to announce with their blazing pyramids the destruction of Troy. Coleridge had agreed to come over to see my father, according to the courtesy of the country, as Mr. Rowe's probable successor; but in the meantime, I had gone to hear him preach the Sunday after his arrival. A poet and a philosopher getting up into a Unitarian pulpit to preach the Gospel, was a romance in these degenerate days, a sort of revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity, which was not to be resisted.

It was in January of 1798, that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, and went to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798. *Il y a des impressions que ni le tems ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dusse-je vivre des siècles entiers, le doux tems de ma jeunesse ne peut renaître pour moi, ni s' effacer jamais dans ma mémoire.** When I got there, the organ was playing the 100th psalm, and when it was done, Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, "And he went up into the mountain to pray, *himself, alone.*" As he gave out this text, his voice "rose like a steam of rich distilled perfume," and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into my mind, "of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts and wild honey." The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon church and state—not their alliance but their separation—on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had "inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore." He made a poetical and pastoral excursion,—and to show the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the sim-

* *Il y a,* etc. "There are impressions which neither time nor circumstances can efface. If I should live whole ages, the sweet days of my youth could never return to me, nor ever be effaced from my memory."—Rousseau's *Confessions.*

ple shepherd boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, "as though he should never be old," and the same poor country-lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk, at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood.

Such were the notes our once-lov'd poet sung.

And for myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together. Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion. This was even beyond my hopes. I returned home well satisfied. The sun that was still laboring pale and wan through the sky, obscured by thick mists, seemed an emblem of the *good cause;* and the cold dank drops of dew, that hung half melted on the beard of the thistle, had something genial and refreshing in them; for there was a spirit of hope and youth in all nature, that turned everything into good. The face of nature had not then the brand of *Jus Divinum* on it:

Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.

On the Tuesday following, the half-inspired speaker came. I was called down into the room where he was, and went half-hoping, half-afraid. He received me very graciously, and I listened for a long time without uttering a word. I did not suffer in his opinion by my silence. "For those two hours," he afterwards was pleased to say, "he was conversing with W. H.'s forehead!" His appearance was different from what I had anticipated from seeing him

before. At a distance, and in the dim light of the chapel, there was to me a strange wildness in his aspect, a dusky obscurity, and I thought him pitted with the smallpox. His complexion was at that time clear, and even bright—

As are the children of yon azure sheen.

His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them, like a sea with darkened lustre. "A certain tender bloom his face o'erspread," a purple tinge as we see it in the pale thoughtful complexions of the Spanish portrait-painters, Murillo and Velasquez. His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his chin good-humored and round; but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done. It might seem that the genius of his face as from a height surveyed and projected him (with sufficient capacity and huge aspiration) into the world unknown of thought and imagination, with nothing to support or guide his veering purpose, as if Columbus had launched his adventurous course for the New World in a scallop, without oars or compass. So at least I comment on it after the event. Coleridge in his person was rather above the common size, inclining to the corpulent, or like Lord Hamlet, "somewhat fat and pursy." His hair (now, alas! gray) was then black and glossy as the raven's, and fell in smooth masses over his forehead. This long pendulous hair is peculiar to enthusiasts, to those whose minds tend heavenward; and is traditionally inseparable (though of a different color) from the pictures of Christ. It ought to belong, as a character, to all who preach *Christ*

crucified, and Coleridge was at that time one of those! . . .

The poet-preacher took leave, and I accompanied him six miles on the road. It was a fine morning in the middle of winter, and he talked the whole way. The scholar in Chaucer is described as going

——sounding on his way.

So Coleridge went on his. In digressing, in dilating, in passing from subject to subject, he appeared to me to float in air, to slide on ice. He told me in confidence (going along) that he should have preached two sermons before he accepted the situation at Shrewsbury, one on Infant Baptism, the other on the Lord's Supper, showing that he could not administer either, which would have effectually disqualified him for the object in view. I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the foot-path to the other. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since. He seemed unable to keep on in a straight line. . . .

If I had the quaint Muse of Sir Philip Sidney to assist me, I would write a *Sonnet to the Road between W—m and Shrewsbury,* and immortalise every step of it by some fond enigmatical conceit. I would swear that the very milestones had ears, and that Harmer-hill stooped with all its pines, to listen to a poet, as he passed! I remember but one other topic of discourse in this walk. He mentioned Paley, praised the naturalness and clearness of his style, but condemned his sentiments, thought him a mere time-serving casuist, and said that 'the fact of his work

on Moral and Political Philosophy being made a text-book in our universities was a disgrace to the national character.' We parted at the six-mile stone; and I returned homeward pensive but much pleased. I had met with unexpected notice from a person whom I believed to have been prejudiced against me. 'Kind and affable to me had been his condescension, and should be honored ever with suitable regard.' He was the first poet I had known, and he certainly answered to that inspired name. I had heard a great deal of his powers of conversation, and was not disappointed. In fact, I never met with anything at all like them, either before or since. I could easily credit the accounts which were circulated of his holding forth to a large party of ladies and gentlemen, an evening or two before, on the Berkeleian Theory, when he made the whole material universe look like a transparency of fine words; and another story (which I believe he has somewhere told himself) of his being asked to a party at Birmingham, of his smoking tobacco and going to sleep after dinner on a sofa, where the company found him, to their no small surprise, which was increased to wonder when he started up of a sudden, and rubbing his eyes, looked about him, and launched into a three hours' description of the third heaven, of which he had had a dream, very different from Mr. Southey's *Vision of Judgment,* and also from that other Vision of Judgment which Mr. Murray, the Secretary of the Bridge-street Junto, has taken into his especial keeping!

On my way back, I had a sound in my ears, it was the voice of Fancy: I had a light before me, it was the face of Poetry. The one still lingers there, the other has not quitted my side! Coleridge in truth met me half-way on the ground of philosophy, or

I should not have been won over to his imaginative creed.

1823

From CHARACTERS OF SHAKSPERE'S PLAYS

HAMLET

This is that Hamlet the Dane, whom we read of in our youth, and whom we may be said almost to remember in our after-years; he who made that famous soliloquy on life, who gave the advice to the players, who thought "this goodly frame, the earth, a steril promontory, and this brave o'erhanging firmament, the air, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors"; whom "man delighted not, nor woman neither"; he who talked with the grave-diggers, and moralized on Yorick's skull; the schoolfellow of Rosencrans and Guildenstern at Wittenberg; the friend of Horatio; the lover of Ophelia; he that was mad and sent to England; the slow avenger of his father's death; who lived at the court of Horwendillus five hundred years before we were born, but all whose thoughts we seem to know as well as we do our own, because we have read them in Shakspere.

Hamlet is a name; his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is *we* who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself "too much i' th' sun"; whoever has seen the

golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known "the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes"; he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady, who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought, he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to a play as his best resource to shove off, to a second remove, the evils of life by a mock representation of them—this is the true Hamlet.

We have been so used to this tragedy that we hardly know how to criticize it any more than we should know how to describe our own faces. But we must make such observations as we can. It is the one of Shakspere's plays that we think of the oftenest, because it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. Whatever happens to him we apply to ourselves, because he applies it so himself as a means of general reasoning. He is a great moralizer; and what makes him worth attending to is that he moralizes on his own feelings and experience. He is not a common-place pedant. If *Lear* is distinguished by the greatest depth of passion, *Hamlet* is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. Shakspere had more magnanimity than any other poet, and he has shown more of it in this play than in

any other. There is no attempt to force an interest: everything is left for time and circumstances to unfold. The attention is excited without effort, the incidents succeed each other as matters of course, the characters think and speak and act just as they might do, if left entirely to themselves. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might be supposed to have taken place at the court of Denmark, at the remote period of time fixed upon, before the modern refinements in morals and manners were heard of. It would have been interesting enough to have been admitted as a by-stander in such a scene, at such a time, to have heard and witnessed something of what was going on. But here we are more than spectators. We have not only "the outward pageants and the signs of grief"; but "we have that within which passes show." We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature: but Shakspere, together with his own comments, gives us the original text, that we may judge for ourselves: This is a very great advantage.

The character of Hamlet stands quite by itself. It is not a character marked by strength of will or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be: but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility —the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the natural bias of his disposition by the strangeness of his situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only hurried into extremi-

ties on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect, as in the scene where he kills Polonius, and again, where he alters the letters which Rosencrans and Guildenstern are taking with them to England, purporting his death. At other times, when he is most bound to act, he remains puzzled, undecided, and skeptical, dallies with his purposes, till the occasion is lost, and always finds some pretence to relapse into indolence and thoughtfulness again. For this reason he refuses to kill the King when he is at his prayers, and by a refinement in malice, which is in truth only an excuse for his own want of resolution, defers his revenge to a more fatal opportunity, when he shall be engaged in some act "that has no relish of salvation in it."

> He kneels and prays,
> And now I'll do 't, and so he goes to heaven,
> And so am I reveng'd; *that would be scann'd;*
> He kill'd my father, and for that,
> I, his sole son, send him to heaven.
> Why this is reward, not revenge.
> Up sword and know thou a more horrid time,
> When he is drunk, asleep, or in a rage.

He is the prince of philosophical speculators; and because he cannot have his revenge perfect, according to the most refined idea his wish can form, he declines it altogether. So he scruples to trust the suggestions of the Ghost, contrives the scene of the play to have surer proof of his uncle's guilt, and then rests satisfied with this confirmation of his suspicions, and the success of his experiment, instead of acting upon it. Yet he is sensible of his own weakness, taxes himself with it, and tries to reason himself out of it.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast; no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To rust in us unus'd: now whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event.—
A thought which quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And ever three parts coward;—I do not know
Why yet I live to say, this thing's to do;
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do it. Examples gross as earth exhort me:
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. 'Tis not to be great
Never to stir without great argument;
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth.

Still he does nothing; and this very speculation on his own infirmity only affords him another occasion for indulging it. It is not for any want of attachment to his father or abhorrence of his murder that Hamlet is thus dilatory, but it is more to his taste to indulge his imagination in reflecting upon the enormity of the crime and refining on his schemes of vengeance, than to put them into immediate practice. His ruling passion is to think, not to act: and any vague pretext that flatters this propensity instantly diverts him from his previous purposes.

The moral perfection of this character has been called in question, we think, by those who did not understand it. It is more interesting than according to rules; amiable, though not faultless. The ethical delineations of "that noble and liberal casuist" (as Shakspere has been well called) do not exhibit the drab-colored quakerism of morality. His plays are not copied either from *The Whole Duty of Man* or from *The Academy of Compliments!* We confess we are a little shocked at the want of refinement in those who are shocked at the want of refinement in Hamlet. The neglect of punctilious exactness in his behavior either partakes of the "license of the time," or else belongs to the very excess of intellectual refinement in the character, which makes the common rules of life, as well as his own purposes, sit loose upon him. He may be said to be amenable only to the tribunal of his own thoughts, and is too much taken up with the airy world of contemplation to lay as much stress as he ought on the practical consequences of things. His habitual principles of action are unhinged and out of joint with the time. His conduct to Ophelia is quite natural in his circumstances. It is that of assumed severity only. It is the effect of disappointed hope, of bitter regrets, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the

distractions of the scene around him! Amidst the natural and preternatural horrors of his situation, he might be excused in delicacy from carrying on a regular courtship. When "his father's spirit was in arms," it was not a time for the son to make love in. He could neither marry Ophelia, nor wound her mind by explaining the cause of his alienation, which he durst hardly trust himself to think of. It would have taken him years to have come to a direct explanation on the point. In the harassed state of his mind, he could not have done much otherwise than he did. His conduct does not contradict what he says when he sees her funeral.

> I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
> Could not with all their quantity of love
> Make up my sum.

Nothing can be more affecting or beautiful than the Queen's apostrophe to Ophelia on throwing the flowers into the grave.

> —Sweets to the sweet, farewell.
> I hop'd thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife:
> I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
> And not have strew'd thy grave.

Shakspere was thoroughly a master of the mixed motives of human character, and he here shows us the Queen, who was so criminal in some respects, not without sensibility and affection in other relations of life.—Ophelia is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon. Oh, rose of May, oh, flower too soon faded! Her love, her madness, her death, are described with the truest touches of tenderness and pathos. It is a character which nobody but Shakspere could have drawn in the

way that he has done, and to the conception of which there is not even the smallest approach, except in some of the old romantic ballads. Her brother, Laertes, is a character we do not like so well: he is too hot and choleric, and somewhat rhodomontade. Polonius is a perfect character in its kind; nor is there any foundation for the objections which have been made to the consistency of this part. It is said that he acts very foolishly and talks very sensibly. There is no inconsistency in that. Again, that he talks wisely at one time and foolishly at another; that his advice to Laertes is very sensible, and his advice to the King and Queen on the subject of Hamlet's madness very ridiculous. But he gives the one as a father, and is sincere in it; he gives the other as a mere courtier, a busy-body, and is accordingly officious, garrulous, and impertinent. In short, Shakspere has been accused of inconsistency in this and other characters, only because he has kept up the distinction which there is in nature, between the understandings and the moral habits of men, between the absurdity of their ideas and the absurdity of their motives. Polonius is not a fool, but he makes himself so. His folly, whether in his actions or speeches, comes under the head of impropriety of intention.

We do not like to see our author's plays acted, and least of all, *Hamlet*. There is no play that suffers so much in being transferred to the stage. Hamlet himself seems hardly capable of being acted. Mr. Kemble unavoidably fails in this character from a want of ease and variety. The character of Hamlet is made up of undulating lines; it has the yielding flexibility of "a wave o' th' sea." Mr. Kemble plays it like a man in armor, with a determined inveteracy of purpose, in one undeviating straight line, which is as remote from the natural grace and refined susceptibility of the character, as the sharp

angles and abrupt starts which Mr. Kean introduces into the part. Mr. Kean's Hamlet is as much too splenetic and rash as Mr. Kemble's is too deliberate and formal. His manner is too strong and pointed. He throws a severity, approaching to virulence, into the common observations and answers. There is nothing of this in Hamlet. He is, as it were, wrapped up in his reflections, and only *thinks aloud*. There should therefore be no attempt to impress what he says upon others by a studied exaggeration of emphasis or manner; no *talking at* his hearers. There should be as much of the gentleman and scholar as possible infused into the part, and as little of the actor. A pensive air of sadness should sit reluctantly upon his brow, but no appearance of fixed and sullen gloom. He is full of weakness and melancholy, but there is no harshness in his nature. He is the most amiable of misanthropes.

1817

From ON FAMILIAR STYLE

It is not easy to write a familiar style. Many people mistake a familiar for a vulgar style, and suppose that to write without affectation is to write at random. On the contrary, there is nothing that requires more precision, and, if I may so say, purity of expression, than the style I am speaking of. It utterly rejects not only all unmeaning pomp, but all low, cant phrases, and loose, unconnected, *slipshod* allusions. It is not to take the first word that offers, but the best word in common use; it is not to throw words together in any combination we please, but to follow and avail ourselves of the true idiom of the language. To write a genuine familiar or truly English style, is to write as any one would speak in common conversation, who had a thorough command and

choice of words, or who could discourse with ease, force, and perspicuity, setting aside all pedantic and oratorical flourishes. Or to give another illustration, to write naturally is the same thing in regard to common conversation, as to read naturally is in regard to common speech. It does not follow that it is an easy thing to give the true accent and inflection to the words you utter, because you do not attempt to rise above the level of ordinary life and colloquial speaking. You do not assume indeed the solemnity of the pulpit, or the tone of stage-declamation: neither are you at liberty to gabble on at a venture, without emphasis or discretion, or to resort to vulgar dialect or clownish pronunciation. You must steer a middle course. You are tied down to a given and appropriate articulation, which is determined by the habitual associations between sense and sound, and which you can only hit by entering into the author's meaning, as you must find the proper words and style to express yourself by fixing your thoughts on the subject you have to write about. Any one may mouth out a passage with a theatrical cadence, or get upon stilts to tell his thoughts: but to write or speak with propriety and simplicity is a more difficult task. Thus it is easy to affect a pompous style, to use a word twice as big as the thing you want to express: it is not so easy to pitch upon the very word that exactly fits it. Out of eight or ten words equally common, equally intelligible, with nearly equal pretensions, it is a matter of some nicety and discrimination to pick out the very one, the preferableness of which is scarcely perceptible, but decisive. The reason why I object to Dr. Johnson's style is, that there is no discrimination, no selection, no variety in it. He uses none but "tall, opaque words," taken from the "first row of the rubric":—words with the greatest number of syllables, or Latin

phrases with merely English terminations. If a fine style depended on this sort of arbitrary pretension, it would be fair to judge of an author's elegance by the measurement of his words, and the substitution of foreign circumlocutions (with no precise associations) for the mother-tongue. How simple it is to be dignified without ease, to be pompous without meaning! Surely, it is but a mechanical rule for avoiding what is low to be always pedantic and affected. It is clear you cannot use a vulgar English word, if you never use a common English word at all. A fine tact is shown in adhering to those which are perfectly common, and yet never falling into any expressions which are debased by disgusting circumstances, or which owe their signification and point to technical or professional allusions. A truly natural or familiar style can never be quaint or vulgar, for this reason, that it is of universal force and applicability, and that quaintness and vulgarity arise out of the immediate connection of certain words with coarse and disagreeable, or with confined ideas. The last form what we understand by *cant* or *slang* phrases. —To give an example of what is not very clear in the general statement. I should say that the phrase *To cut with a knife,* or *To cut a piece of wood,* is perfectly free from vulgarity, because it is perfectly common: but to *cut an acquaintance* is not quite unexceptionable, because it is not perfectly common or intelligible, and has hardly yet escaped out of the limits of slang phraseology. I should hardly therefore use the word in this sense without putting it in italics as a license of expression, to be received *cum grano salis.* All provincial or bye-phrases come under the same mark of reprobation—all such as the writer transfers to the page from his fireside or a particular *coterie,* or that he invents

for his own sole use and convenience. I conceive that words are like money, not the worse for being common, but that it is the stamp of custom alone that gives them circulation or value. I am fastidious in this respect, and would almost as soon coin the currency of the realm as counterfeit the King's English. I never invented or gave a new and unauthorized meaning to any word but one single one (the term *impersonal* applied to feelings) and that was in an abstruse metaphysical discussion to express a very difficult distinction. I have been (I know) loudly accused of revelling in vulgarisms and broken English. I cannot speak to that point: but so far I plead guilty to the determined use of acknowledged idioms and common elliptical expressions. I am not sure that the critics in question know the one from the other, that is, can distinguish any medium between formal pedantry and the most barbarous solecism. As an author, I endeavor to employ plain words and popular modes of construction, as were I a chapman and dealer, I should common weights and measures.

The proper force of words lies not in the words themselves, but in their application. A word may be a fine-sounding word, of an unusual length, and very imposing from its learning and novelty, and yet in the connection in which it is introduced, may be quite pointless and irrelevant. It is not pomp or pretension, but the adaptation of the expression to the idea that clenches a writer's meaning:—as it is not the size or glossiness of the materials, but their being fitted each to its place, that gives strength to the arch; or as the pegs and nails are as necessary to the support of the building as the larger timbers, and more so than the mere showy, unsubstantial ornaments. I hate anything that occupies more space than it is worth. I hate to see a load of band-boxes

go along the street, and I hate to see a parcel of big words without any thing in them. A person who does not deliberately dispose of all his thoughts alike in cumbrous draperies and flimsy disguises, may strike out twenty varieties of familiar everyday language, each coming somewhat nearer to the feeling he wants to convey, and at last not hit upon that particular and only one, which may be said to be identical with the exact impression in his mind. This would seem to show that Mr. Cobbett is hardly right in saying that the first word that occurs is always the best. It may be a very good one; and yet a better may present itself on reflection or from time to time. It should be suggested naturally, however, and spontaneously, from a fresh and lively conception of the subject. We seldom succeed by trying at improvement, or by merely substituting one word for another that we are not satisfied with, as we cannot recollect the name of a place or person by merely plaguing ourselves about it. We wander farther from the point by persisting in a wrong scent; but it starts up accidentally in the memory when we least expected it, by touching some link in the chain of previous association.

There are those who hoard up and make a cautious display of nothing but rich and rare phraseology;—ancient medals, obscure coins, and Spanish pieces of eight. They are very curious to inspect; but I myself would neither offer nor take them in the course of exchange. A sprinkling of archaisms is not amiss; but a tissue of obsolete expressions is more fit *for keep than wear*. I do not say I would not use any phrase that had been brought into fashion before the middle or the end of the last century; but I should be shy of using any that had not been employed by any approved author during the whole of that time. Words, like clothes, get old-fashioned,

or mean and ridiculous, when they have been for some time laid aside. Mr. Lamb is the only imitator of old English style I can read with pleasure; and he is so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his authors that the idea of imitation is almost done away. There is an inward unction, a marrowy vein both in the thought and feeling, an intuition, deep and lively, of his subject, that carries off any quaintness or awkwardness arising from an antiquated style and dress. The matter is completely his own, though the manner is assumed. Perhaps his ideas are altogether so marked and individual, as to require their point and pungency to be neutralized by the affectation of a singular but traditional form of conveyance. Tricked out in the prevailing costume, they would probably seem more startling and out of the way. The old English authors, Burton, Fuller, Coryate, Sir Thomas Brown, are a kind of mediators between us and the more eccentric and whimsical modern, reconciling us to his peculiarities. I do not, however, know how far this is the case or not, till he condescends to write like one of us. I must confess that what I like best of his papers under the signature of Elia (still I do not presume, amidst such excellence, to decide what is most excellent) is the account of *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist,* which is also the most free from obsolete allusions and turns of expression—

A well of native English undefiled.

To those acquainted with his admired prototypes, these Essays of the ingenious and highly gifted author have the same sort of charm and relish, that Erasmus's *Colloquies* or a fine piece of modern Latin have to the classical scholar. Certainly, I do not know any borrowed pencil that has more power or

felicity of execution than the one of which I have here been speaking.

It is as easy to write a gaudy style without ideas, as it is to spread a pallet of showy colors, or to smear in a flaunting transparency. "What do you read?"—"Words, words, words."—"What is the matter?"—*"Nothing,"* it might be answered. The florid style is the reverse of the familiar. The last is employed as an unvarnished medium to convey ideas; the first is resorted to as a spangled veil to conceal the want of them.

1821

SIR WALTER SCOTT
1771-1832

Most of the Romantics were almost entirely devoted to literature and art. Literature was only one of Scott's pursuits. He also enjoyed the life of a lawyer, of a scholar and editor, of a sportsman, and of a country gentlemen who built up a noble estate (Abbotsford) and dispensed generous hospitality. In all his works he glorified the heroic and the honorable; and that this was not merely sentimental was shown by his conduct when the publishing firm with which he was connected failed. Although sick and aging, he toiled away manfully until his death, and made over all his earnings to the creditors. The common type of man would have gone into bankruptcy, and would thereafter have retained whatever he might earn. Among us Americans, Theodore Roosevelt best resembles him in abounding richness and strenuousness of life, in combining delight in action with delight in books. Partly on that account, the narrowly literary, the academic, the sophisticated self-styled Intelligentsia, have always tried to belittle Scott, holding it against him that he is not, like them, preoccupied with the temperamental, introspective, morbid, bizarre, subtle, or decadent. In the esteem of the general public, however, the

poems and novels of Scott have maintained an unassailable place. Like every great author, Sir Walter Scott gives us something that we can obtain nowhere else.

While Wordsworth was disclosing the beauty that lay in contemporaneous life and surroundings, Scott revealed the splendor of the past and of the unconventional. His standards and ideals were the same as those of his fellow-romantics; but he felt that the glory of those ideals could be best manifested by evoking the life of the past and of the frontier. Scotland occupied in British life much the same place as our frontier has held in the American: there both Nature and Man seemed less cultured and conventional; and there lay greater opportunities for the study of the strange, rugged, and picturesque. To this was added Scott's conception of nationality and patriotism. He felt, like Edmund Burke, that a people was not merely an aggregation of individuals, but an organic, complex whole, united by the moulding influences of its earlier history. In his Waverley novels he disclosed the ways in which the past has moulded the present.

Scott did not attempt to reproduce the past pedantically; but he translated, in terms intelligible to the present, those features of the past which had enduring significance. He evoked the life of those ages in which there was more freedom for the manifestation of character in dramatic deeds, more opportunity for strong passions, natural feelings, and sincere manners to exhibit themselves, more chance for love to show itself as an instinct and a passion rather than a rational preference (this in his poems rather than in his novels), more scope for the development of a multitude of peculiarities in characters from kings and queens to peasants and gypsies. Since Shakspere, with his chronicle-histories, no British man of letters had thus made the life of the past a vital force in the life of the present.

Scott furthered the revival and vogue of the ballad and the verse-romance (the latter cultivated after him by Byron). He founded the modern historical novel, having not only scores of followers in England and America (Bulwer-Lytton, Cooper, Dickens, Reade, etc.) but also hundreds in Europe (Hugo, Mérimée, De Vigny, Hauff, Freytag, Manzoni, etc.).

LOCHINVAR

Oh! young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;

And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love and a dastard in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,—
For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,—
'Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?'—

'I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.'

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar,—
'Now tread we a measure!' said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, ''T were better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'

One touch to her hand and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

1808

MARMION AND DOUGLAS

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels;
And think what next he must have felt
At buckling of the falchion belt!
And judge how Clara changed her hue

While fastening to her lover's side
A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue!
Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
'Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
I dub thee knight.
Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!
For king, for church, for lady fair,
See that thou fight.'
And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said: 'Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,
Disgrace, and trouble;
For He who honor best bestows
May give thee double.'
De Wilton sobbed, for sob he must:
'Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
That Douglas is my brother!'
'Nay, nay,' old Angus said, 'not so;
To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field;
And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
Upon them bravely—do thy worst,
And foul fall him that blenches first!'

Not far advanced was morning day
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride;
He had safe-conduct for his band
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide.
The ancient earl with stately grace
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whispered in an undertone,
'Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown.'
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopped to bid adieu:

'Though something I might plain,' he said,
'Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your king's behest,
While in Tantallion's towers I stayed,
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble earl, receive my hand.'—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke:—
'My manors, halls, and bowers shall still
Be open at my sovereign's will
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my king's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own,
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp.'

Burned Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire
And shook his very frame for ire,
And—'This to me!' he said,
'An 't were not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And first I tell thee, haughty peer,
He who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate;
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,—
Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,—
I tell thee, thou 'rt defied!
And if thou saidst I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,

Lord Angus, thou hast lied!'
On the earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth,—'And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall.'—
Lord Marmion turned,—well was his need,—
And dashed the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous grate behind him rung;
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars descending razed his plume.

The steed along the drawbridge flies
Just as it trembled on the rise;
Not lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim:
And when Lord Marmion reached his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
'Horse! horse!' the Douglas cried, 'and chase!'
But soon he reined his fury's pace:
'A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.—
A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed?
At first in heart it liked me ill
When the king praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line;
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—

Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
'T is pity of him too,' he cried:
'Bold can he speak and fairly ride,
I warrant him a warrior tried.'
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

1808

From THE LADY OF THE LAKE

SOLDIER, REST!

'Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

'No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang of war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,

Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.' . . .

'Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying:
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.'

1810

CORONACH

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever.

1810

From ROKEBY

BRIGNALL BANKS

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily,—
'O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen.'

'If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we
That dwell by dale and down?
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May.'

Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen.

'I read you, by your bugle horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn
To keep the king's greenwood.'
'A ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 't is at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night.'
Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May!

'With burnished brand and musketoon
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum.'
'I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.
And O, though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare
Would reign my Queen of May!

'Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die;
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
Were better mate than I!

And when I'm with my comrades met
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.
Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen.'

1813

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

'Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen'—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

'Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen'—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

'A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;

And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen.'—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was decked at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmered fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen!
She's o'er the Border and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

1816

PROUD MAISIE

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

'Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?'—
'When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye.'

'Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?'—
'The gray-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

'The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady.
The owl from the steeple sing,
"Welcome, proud lady."'

1818

COUNTY GUY

Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark his lay who thrilled all day
Sits hushed his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower confess the hour,
But where is County Guy?

The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To beauty shy by lattice high,
Sings high-born Cavalier.
The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know—
But where is County Guy?

1832

BONNY DUNDEE

To the Lords of Convention 't was Claver'se who spoke,
'Ere the King's crown shall fall there are crowns to be broke;
So let each Cavalier who loves honor and me,
Come follow the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle your horses and call up your men;
Come open the West Port and let me gang free,
And it's room for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!'

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street,
The bells are rung backward, the drums they are beat;
But the Provost, douce man, said, 'Just e'en let him be,
The Gude Town is weel quit of that Deil of Dundee.'
Come fill up my cup, etc.

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,
Ilk carline was flyting and shaking her pow;
But the young plants of grace they looked couthie and slee,
Thinking, luck to thy bonnet, thou Bonny Dundee!
Come fill up my cup, etc.

With sour-featured Whigs the Grassmarket was crammed
As if half the West had set tryst to be hanged;
There was spite in each look, there was fear in each e'e,
As they watched for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

These cowls of Kilmarnock had spits and had spears,
And lang-hafted gullies to kill Cavaliers;
But they shrunk to close-heads and the causeway was free,
At the toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

He spurred to the foot of the proud Castle rock,
And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke;
'Let Mons Meg and her marrows speak twa words or three,
For the love of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.'
Come fill up my cup, etc.

The Gordon demands of him which way he goes—
'Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose!
Your Grace in short space shall hear tidings of me,
Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

'There are hills beyond Pentland and lands beyond Forth,
If there's lords in the Lowlands, there's chiefs in the North;
There are wild Duniewassals three thousand times three,
Who cry *hoigh!* for the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

'There's brass on the target of barkened bull-hide;
There's steel in the scabbard that dangles beside;
The brass shall be burnished, the steel shall flash free,
At a toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

'Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks—
Ere I own an usurper, I'll couch with the fox;
And tremble, false Whigs, in the midst of your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me!'
Come fill up my cup, etc.

He waved his proud hand and the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums clashed, and the horsemen rode on,
Till on Ravelston's cliffs and on Clermiston's lee
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle the horses and call up the men;
Come open your gates and let me gae free,
For it's up with the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!

1830

THE GYPSY'S CURSE

From GUY MANNERING

Little Harry Bertram, one of the hardiest and most lively children that ever made a sword and grenadier's cap of rushes, now approached his fifth revolving birthday. A hardihood of disposition, which early developed itself, made him already a little wanderer; he was well acquainted with every patch of lea ground and dingle around Ellangowan, and could tell in his broken language upon what "baulks" grew the bonniest flowers, and what copse had the ripest nuts. He repeatedly terrified his attendants by clambering over the ruins of the old castle, and had more than once made a stolen excursion as far as the gypsy hamlet.

On these occasions he was generally brought back by Meg Merrilies, who, though she could not be prevailed upon to enter the Place of Ellangowan after her nephew had been given up to the pressgang, did not apparently extend her resentment to the child. On the contrary, she often contrived to waylay him in his walks, sing him a gypsy song, give him a ride upon her jackass, and thrust into his pocket a piece of gingerbread or red-cheeked apple. This woman's ancient attachment to the family, repelled and checked in every other direction, seemed to rejoice in having some object on which it could yet repose and expand itself. She prophesied a hundred times, "that young Mr. Harry would be the pride o' the family, and there hadna been sic a sprout frae the auld aik since the death of Arthur Mac-Dingawaie, that was killed in the battle o' the Bloody Bay; as for the present stick, it was good for naething but firewood." On one occasion, when the child was ill,

she lay all night below the window, chanting a rhyme which she believed sovereign as a febrifuge, and could neither be prevailed upon to enter the house, nor to leave the station she had chosen, till she was informed that the crisis was over.

The affection of this woman became matter of suspicion, not indeed to the laird, who was never hasty in suspecting evil, but to his wife, who had indifferent health and poor spirits. She was now far advanced in a second pregnancy, and, as she could not walk abroad herself, and the woman who attended upon Harry was young and thoughtless, she prayed Dominie Sampson to undertake the task of watching the boy in his rambles, when he should not be otherwise accompanied. The Dominie loved his young charge, and was enraptured with his own success, in having already brought him so far in his learning as to spell words of three syllables. The idea of this early prodigy of erudition being carried off by the gypsies, like a second Adam Smith, was not to be tolerated; and accordingly, though the charge was contrary to all his habits of life, he readily undertook it, and might be seen stalking about with a mathematical problem in his head, and his eye upon a child of five years old, whose rambles led him into a hundred awkward situations. Twice was the Dominie chased by a cross-grained cow, once he fell into the brook crossing at the stepping-stones, and another time was bogged up to the middle in the slough of Lochend, in attempting to gather a water-lily for the young laird. It was the opinion of the village matrons who relieved Sampson on the latter occasion, "that the laird might as weel trust the care o' his bairn to a potato bogle"; but the good Dominie bore all his disasters with gravity and serenity equally imperturbable. "Pro-

di-gi-ous!" was the only ejaculation they ever extorted from the much-enduring man.

The laird had by this time determined to make root-and-branch work with the Maroons of Derncleugh. The old servants shook their heads at his proposal, and even Dominie Sampson ventured upon an indirect remonstrance. As, however, it was couched, in the oracular phrase: *"Ne moveas Camerinam,"* neither the allusion, nor the language in which it was expressed was calculated for Mr. Bertram's edification, and matters proceeded against the gypsies in form of law. Every door in the hamlet was chalked by the ground-officer, in token of a formal warning to remove at next term. Still, however, they showed no symptoms either of submission or of compliance. At length the term-day, the fatal Martinmas, arrived, and violent measures of ejection were resorted to. A strong posse of peace-officers, sufficient to render all resistance vain, charged the inhabitants to depart by noon; and, as they did not obey, the officers, in terms of their warrant, proceeded to unroof the cottages, and pull down the wretched doors and windows,—a summary and effectual mode of ejection, still practiced in some remote parts of Scotland, when a tenant proves refractory. The gypsies, for a time, beheld the work of destruction in sullen silence and inactivity; then set about saddling and loading their asses, and making preparations for their departure. These were soon accomplished, where all had the habits of wandering Tartars; and they set forth on their journey to seek new settlements, where their patrons should neither be of the quorum, nor *custos rotulorum*.

Certain qualms of feeling had deterred Ellangowan from attending in person to see his tenants expelled. He left the executive part of the business to the officers of the law, under the immediate direction

of Frank Kennedy, a supervisor, or riding-officer, belonging to the excise, who had of late become intimate at the Place, and of whom we shall have more to say in the next chapter. Mr. Bertram himself chose that day to make a visit to a friend at some distance. But it so happened, notwithstanding his precautions, that he could not avoid meeting his late tenants during their retreat from his property.

It was in a hollow way, near the top of a steep ascent, upon the verge of the Ellangowan estate, that Mr. Bertram met the gypsy procession. Four or five men formed the advanced guard, wrapped in long loose great-coats, that hid their tall, slender figures, as the large slouched hats, drawn over their brows, concealed their wild features, dark eyes, and swarthy faces. Two of them carried long fowling-pieces, one wore a broadsword without a sheath, and all had the Highland dirk, though they did not wear that weapon openly or ostentatiously. Behind them followed the train of laden asses, and small carts, or "tumblers," as they were called in that country, on which were laid the decrepit and the helpless, the aged and infant part of the exiled community. The women in their red cloaks and straw hats, the elder children with bare heads and bare feet, and almost naked bodies, had the immediate care of the little caravan. The road was narrow, running between two broken banks of sand, and Mr. Bertram's servant rode forward, smacking his whip with an air of authority, and motioning to the drivers to allow free passage to their betters. His signal was unattended to. He then called to the men who lounged idly on before, "Stand to your beasts' heads, and make room for the laird to pass."

"He shall have his share of the road," answered a male gypsy from under his slouched and large-brimmed hat, and without raising his face, "and he

shall have nae mair; the highway is as free to our cuddies as to his gelding."

The tone of the man being sulky, and even menacing, Mr. Bertram thought it best to put his dignity in his pocket, and pass by the procession quietly, on such space as they chose to leave for his accommodation, which was narrow enough. To cover with an appearance of indifference his feelings of the want of respect with which he was treated, he addressed one of the men, as he passed him without any show of greeting, salute, or recognition,—"Giles Baillie," he said, "have you heard that your son Gabriel is well?" (The question respected the young man who had been pressed.)

"If I had heard otherwise," said the old man, looking up with a stern and menacing countenance, "you should have heard of it too." And he plodded on his way, tarrying no further question. When the laird had pressed on with difficulty among a crowd of familiar faces, which had on all former occasions marked his approach with the reverence due to that of a superior being, but in which he now only read hatred and contempt, and had got clear of the throng, he could not help turning his horse, and looking back to mark the progress of their march. The group would have been an excellent subject for the pencil of Calotte. The van had already reached a small and stunted thicket, which was at the bottom of the hill, and which gradually hid the line of march until the last stragglers disappeared.

His sensations were bitter enough. The race, it is true, which he had thus summarily dismissed from their ancient place of refuge, was idle and vicious; but had he endeavored to render them otherwise? They were not more irregular characters now, than they had been while they were admitted to consider themselves as a sort of subordinate dependants of

his family; and ought the mere circumstance of his becoming a magistrate to have made at once such a change in his conduct towards them? Some means of reformation ought at least to have been tried, before sending seven families at once upon the wide world, and depriving them of a degree of countenance, which withheld them at least from atrocious guilt. There was also a natural yearning of heart on parting with so many known and familiar faces; and to this feeling Godfrey Bertram was peculiarly accessible, from the limited qualities of his mind, which sought its principal amusements among the petty objects around him. As he was about to turn his horse's head to pursue his journey, Meg Merrilies, who had lagged behind the troop, unexpectedly presented herself.

She was standing upon one of those high, precipitous banks, which, as we before noticed, overhung the road; so that she was placed considerably higher than Ellangowan, even though he was on horseback; and her tall figure, relieved against the clear blue sky, seemed almost of supernatural stature. We have noticed, that there was in her general attire, or rather in her mode of adjusting it, somewhat of a foreign costume, artfully adopted perhaps for the purpose of adding to the effect of her spells and predictions, or perhaps from some traditional notions respecting the dress of her ancestors. On this occasion, she had a large piece of red cotton cloth rolled about her head in the form of a turban, from beneath which her dark eyes flashed with uncommon lustre. Her long and tangled black hair fell in elf-locks from the folds of this singular headgear. Her attitude was that of a sibyl in frenzy, and she stretched out, in her right hand, a sapling bough which seemed just pulled.

"I'll be d——d," said the groom, "if she has not

been cutting the young ashes in the Dukit park!"—The laird made no answer, but continued to look at the figure which was thus perched above his path.

"Ride your ways," said the gypsy, "ride your ways, laird of Ellangowan—ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram!—This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths—see if the fire in your ain parlor burn the blyther for that. Ye have riven the thack off seven cottar houses—look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster.—Ye may stable your stirks in the shealings at Derncleugh—see that the hare does not couch on the hearthstane at Ellangowan.—Ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram—what do ye glower after our folk for?—There's thirty hearts there that wad hae wanted bread ere ye had wanted sunkets, and spent their life-blood ere ye had scratched your finger. Yes—there's thirty yonder, from the auld wife of an hundred to the babe that was born last week, that ye have turned out o' their bits o' bields, to sleep with the tod and the blackcock in the muirs! —Ride your ways, Ellangowan.—Our bairns are hinging at our weary backs—look that your braw cradle at hame be the fairer spread up: not that I am wishing ill to little Harry, or to the babe that's yet to be born—God forbid—and make them kind to the poor, and better folk than their father!—And now, ride e'en your ways; for these are the last words ye'll ever hear Meg Merrilies speak, and this is the last reise that I'll ever cut in the bonny woods of Ellangowan."

So saying, she broke the sapling she held in her hand, and flung it into the road. Margaret of Anjou, bestowing on her triumphant foes her keen-edged malediction, could not have turned from them with a gesture more proudly contemptuous. The laird was clearing his voice to speak, and thrusting his hand in his pocket to find a half-crown; the gypsy

waited neither for his reply nor his donation, but strode down the hill to overtake the caravan.

Ellangowan rode pensively home; and it was remarkable that he did not mention this interview to any of his family. The groom was not so reserved; he told the story at great length to a full audience in the kitchen, and concluded by swearing, that "if ever the Devil spoke by the mouth of a woman, he had spoken by that of Meg Merrilies that blessed day."

1815

JEANIE DEANS AND QUEEN CAROLINE

From THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN

Jeanie Deans, whose sister Effie lies in Edinburgh under sentence of death for the murder of her illegitimate child, has tramped on foot more than four hundred miles from Edinburgh to London to pray for a pardon from Queen Caroline, and the Duke of Argyll has brought her before Her Majesty.

The Duke made a signal for Jeanie to advance from the spot where she had hitherto remained watching countenances, which were too long accustomed to suppress all apparent signs of emotion, to convey to her any interesting intelligence. Her Majesty could not help smiling at the awe-struck manner in which the quiet demure figure of the little Scotchwoman advanced toward her, and yet more at the first sound of her broad northern accent. But Jeanie had a voice low and sweetly toned, an admirable thing in woman, and eke besought "her Leddyship to have pity on a poor misguided young creature," in tones so affecting, that, like the notes of some of her native songs, provincial vulgarity was lost in pathos.

"Stand up, young woman," said the Queen, but

in a kind tone, "and tell me what sort of a barbarous people your countryfolk are, where child-murder is become so common as to require the restraint of laws like yours?"

"If your Leddyship pleases," answered Jeanie, "there are mony places besides Scotland where mothers are unkind to their ain flesh and blood."

It must be observed, that the disputes between George the Second, and Frederick, Prince of Wales, were then at the highest, and that the good-natured part of the public laid the blame on the Queen. She colored highly, and darted a glance of a most penetrating character first at Jeanie, and then at the Duke. Both sustained it unmoved; Jeanie from total unconsciousness of the offence she had given, and the Duke from his habitual composure. But in his heart he thought, My unlucky protégée has, with this luckless answer, shot dead, by a kind of chance-medley, her only hope of success.

Lady Suffolk, good-humoredly and skilfully, interposed in this awkward crisis. "You should tell this lady," she said to Jeanie, "the particular causes which render this crime common in your country."

"Some thinks it's the Kirk-Session—that is—it's the—it's the cutty-stool, if your Leddyship pleases," said Jeanie, looking down, and curtsying.

"The what?" said Lady Suffolk, to whom the phrase was new, and who besides was rather deaf.

"That's the stool of repentance, madam, if it please your Leddyship," answered Jeanie, "for light life and conversation, and for breaking the seventh command." Here she raised her eyes to the Duke, saw his hand at his chin, and, totally unconscious of what she had said out of joint, gave double effect to the innuendo, by stopping short and looking embarrassed.

As for Lady Suffolk, she retired like a covering

party, which, having interposed betwixt their retreating friends and the enemy, have suddenly drawn on themselves a fire unexpectedly severe.

The deuce take the lass, thought the Duke of Argyle to himself: there goes another shot—and she has hit with both barrels right and left!

Indeed the Duke had himself his share of the confusion, for, having acted as master of ceremonies to this innocent offender, he felt much in the circumstances of a country squire, who, having introduced his spaniel into a well-appointed drawing-room, is doomed to witness the disorder and damage which arises to china and to dress-gowns, in consequence of its untimely frolics. Jeanie's last chance-hit, however, obliterated the ill impression which had arisen from the first; for her Majesty had not so lost the feelings of a wife in those of a Queen, but that she could enjoy a jest at the expense of "her good Suffolk." She turned towards the Duke of Argyle with a smile, which marked that she enjoyed the triumph, and observed, "the Scotch are a rigidly moral people." Then again applying herself to Jeanie, she asked, how she travelled up from Scotland.

"Upon my foot mostly, madam," was the reply.

"What, all that immense way upon foot?—How far can you walk in a day?"

"Five and twenty miles and a bittock."

"And a what?" said the Queen, looking towards the Duke of Argyle.

"And about five miles more," replied the Duke.

"I thought I was a good walker," replied the Queen, "but this shames me sadly."

"May your Leddyship never hae sae weary a heart, that ye canna be sensible of the weariness of the limbs!" said Jeanie.

That came better off, thought the Duke; it's the first thing she has said to the purpose.

"And I didna just a'thegither walk the haill way neither, for I had whiles the cast of a cart; and I had the cast of a horse from Ferrybridge—and divers other easements," said Jeanie, cutting short her story, for she observed the Duke made the sign he had fixed upon.

"With all these accommodations," answered the Queen, "you must have had a very fatiguing journey, and, I fear, to little purpose; since, if the King were to pardon your sister, in all probability it would do her little good, for I suppose your people of Edinburgh would hang her out of spite."

She will sink herself now outright, thought the Duke.

But he was wrong. The shoals on which Jeanie had touched in this delicate conversation lay under ground, and were unknown to her; this rock was above water, and she avoided it.

"She was confident," she said, "that baith town and country wad rejoice to see his Majesty taking compassion on a poor unfriended creature."

"His Majesty has not found it so in a late instance," said the Queen; "but, I suppose, my Lord Duke would advise me to be guided by the votes of the rabble themselves, who should be hanged and who spared?"

"No, madam," said the Duke; "but I would advise his Majesty to be guided by his own feelings, and those of his royal consort; and then, I am sure, punishment will only attach itself to guilt, and even then with cautious reluctance."

"Well, my Lord," said her Majesty, "all these fine speeches do not convince me of the propriety of so soon showing any mark of favor to your—I suppose I must not say rebellious?—but, at least, your very disaffected and intractable metropolis. Why, the whole nation is in a league to screen the savage and

abominable murderers of that unhappy man; otherwise, how is it possible but that, of so many perpetrators, and engaged in so public an action for such a length of time, one at least must have been recognized? Even this wench, for aught I can tell, may be a depository of the secret.—Hark you, young woman, had you any friends engaged in the Porteous mob?"

"No, madam," answered Jeanie, happy that the question was so framed that she could, with a good conscience, answer it in the negative.

"But I suppose," continued the Queen, "if you were possessed of such a secret, you would hold it matter of conscience to keep it to yourself?"

"I would pray to be directed and guided what was the line of duty, madam," answered Jeanie.

"Yes, and take that which suited your own inclinations," replied her Majesty.

"If it like you, madam," said Jeanie, "I would hae gaen to the end of the earth to save the life of John Porteous, or any other unhappy man in his condition; but I might lawfully doubt how far I am called upon to be the avenger of his blood, though it may become the civil magistrate to do so. He is dead and gane to his place, and they that have slain him must answer for their ain act. But my sister, my puir sister Effie, still lives, though her days and hours are numbered!—She still lives, and a word of the King's mouth might restore her to a broken-hearted auld man, that never, in his daily and nightly exercise, forgot to pray that his Majesty might be blessed with a long and a prosperous reign, and that his throne, and the throne of his posterity, might be established in righteousness. O, madam, if ever ye kend what it was to sorrow for and with a sinning and a suffering creature, whose mind is sae tossed that she can be neither ca'd fit to live or die,

have some compassion on our misery!—Save an honest house from dishonor, and an unhappy girl, not eighteen years of age, from an early and dreadful death! Alas! it is not when we sleep soft and wake merry ourselves, that we think on other people's sufferings. Our hearts are waxed light within us then, and we are for righting our ain wrangs and fighting our ain battles. But when the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body—and seldom may it visit your Leddyship—and when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low—lang and late may it be yours—Oh, my Leddy, then it isna what we hae dune for oursells, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly. And the thoughts that ye hae intervened to spare the puir thing's life will be sweeter in that hour, come when it may, than if a word of your mouth could hang the haill Porteous mob at the tail of ae tow."

Tear followed tear down Jeanie's cheeks, as, her features glowing and quivering with emotion, she pleaded her sister's cause with a pathos which was at once simple and solemn.

"This is eloquence," said her Majesty to the Duke of Argyle. "Young woman," she continued, addressing herself to Jeanie, "*I* cannot grant a pardon to your sister—but you shall not want my warm intercession with his Majesty. Take this housewife case," she continued, putting a small embroidered needle-case into Jeanie's hands; "do not open it now, but at your leisure you will find something in it which will remind you that you have had an interview with Queen Caroline."

Jeanie, having her suspicions thus confirmed, dropped on her knees, and would have expanded herself in gratitude; but the Duke, who was upon thorns lest she should say more or less than just enough, touched his chin once more.

"Our business is, I think, ended for the present, my Lord Duke," said the Queen, "and, I trust, to your satisfaction. Hereafter I hope to see your Grace more frequently, both at Richmond and St. James's.—Come, Lady Suffolk, we must wish his Grace good morning."

They exchanged their parting reverences, and the Duke, so soon as the ladies had turned their backs, assisted Jeanie to rise from the ground, and conducted her back through the avenue, which she trode with the feeling of one who walks in her sleep.

1818

JANE AUSTEN
1775-1817

"THAT young lady," said Sir Walter Scott of Miss Austen, "has a talent for describing the involvements of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with." Time has confirmed this judgment; and Miss Austen's novels,—especially *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Emma* (1816),—are still regarded as unsurpassed among novels-of-manners.

The daughter of a clergyman, Miss Austen lived mostly in small towns or villages. Her life, though uneventful, was not indolent; for she not only read eagerly, but she observed the domestic and social life about her keenly, and thought about its significant aspects with ever increasing wisdom. As she studied the lives and characters of her acquaintances, she was now amused, now grieved, at the failure of so many to *think* sufficiently about their domestic and social conduct. In her view, the application of intelligence in those domains was as necessary as it was in business or in public affairs. It was the lack of thoughtfulness at home and in society that led to those comic or odious manifestations of character which she satirizes, more or less

severely,—from the comparatively pardonable hasty prejudices of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy, to the fatuous shallowness of Mrs. Bennet, and to the despicable snobbishness of the Rev. Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Good manners were to Miss Austen of the highest importance because they reflected a percipient mind as well as a kind heart.

A product of the best eighteenth-century traditions, Miss Austen was the greatest author in the Romantic Period who was not herself a Romantic. In *Northanger Abbey* and in *Sense and Sensibility* she satirized excesses and crudities of romanticism, especially "Gothic" tales of terror and sentimental poetry. Her other novels need not be regarded as anti-romantic (especially not *Persuasion*), but on the whole they center attention upon aspects of life which the Romantics neglected.

From PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do not you want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"*You* want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says

that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? how can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better; for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighborhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account; for in general, you know, they visit no newcomers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for *us* to visit him if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous, surely. I daresay Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humored as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he—"they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves."

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least."

"Ah, you do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighborhood."

"It will be no use to us if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty I will visit them all."

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. *Her* mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid, she had no knowledge of it. It was then disclosed in the following manner. Observing his second daughter employed in trimming a hat, he suddenly addressed her with,—

"I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy."

"We are not in a way to know *what* Mr. Bingley likes," said her mother resentfully, "since we are not to visit."

"But you forget, mamma," said Elizabeth, "that we shall meet him at the assemblies, and that Mrs. Long has promised to introduce him."

"I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her."

"No more have I," said Mr. Bennet; "and I am glad to find that you do not depend on her serving you."

Mrs. Bennet deigned not to make any reply, but, unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters.

"Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for Heaven's

sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces."

"Kitty has no discretion in her coughs," said her father; "she times them ill."

"I do not cough for my own amusement," replied Kitty fretfully. "When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?"

"To-morrow fortnight."

"Aye, so it is," cried her mother, "and Mrs. Long does not come back till the day before; so it will be impossible for her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself."

"Then, my dear, you may have the advantage of your friend, and introduce Mr. Bingley to *her*."

"Impossible, Mr. Bennet, impossible, when I am not acquainted with him myself; how can you be so teasing?"

"I honor your circumspection. A fortnight's acquaintance is certainly very little. One cannot know what a man really is by the end of a fortnight. But if *we* do not venture somebody else will; and after all, Mrs. Long and her nieces must stand their chance; and therefore, as she will think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office, I will take it on myself."

The girls stared at their father. Mrs. Bennet said only, "Nonsense, nonsense!"

"What can be the meaning of that emphatic exclamation?" cried he. "Do you consider the forms of introduction, and the stress that is laid on them, as nonsense? I cannot quite agree with you *there*.—What say you, Mary? for you are a young lady of deep reflection, I know, and read great books, and make extracts."

Mary wished to say something very sensible, but knew not how.

"While Mary is adjusting her ideas," he continued, "let us return to Mr. Bingley."

"I am sick of Mr. Bingley," cried his wife.

"I am sorry to hear *that;* but why did not you tell me so before? If I had known as much this morning, I certainly would not have called on him. It is very unlucky; but as I have actually paid the visit, we cannot escape the acquaintance now."

The astonishment of the ladies was just what he wished—that of Mrs. Bennet perhaps surpassing the rest; though when the first tumult of joy was over, she began to declare that it was what she had expected all the while.

"How good it was in you, my dear Mr. Bennet! But I knew I should persuade you at last. I was sure you loved your girls too well to neglect such an acquaintance. Well, how pleased I am! and it is such a good joke, too, that you should have gone this morning, and never said a word about it till now."

"Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you choose," said Mr. Bennet; and as he spoke he left the room, fatigued with the raptures of his wife.

"What an excellent father you have, girls!" said she, when the door was shut. "I do not know how you will ever make him amends for his kindness; or me either, for that matter. At our time of life it is not so pleasant, I can tell you, to be making new acquaintance every day! but for your sakes, we would do anything. Lydia, my love, though you *are* the youngest, I dare say Mr. Bingley will dance with you at the next ball."

"Oh!" said Lydia stoutly, "I am not afraid; for though I *am* the youngest, I'm the tallest."

The rest of the evening was spent in conjecturing how soon he would return Mr. Bennet's visit, and determining when they should ask him to dinner.

Not all that Mrs. Bennet, however, with the assistance of her five daughters, could ask on the subject, was sufficient to draw from her husband any satisfactory description of Mr. Bingley. They attacked him in various ways; with barefaced questions, ingenious suppositions, and distant surmises; but he eluded the skill of them all; and they were at last obliged to accept the second-hand intelligence of their neighbor Lady Lucas. Her report was highly favorable. Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love; and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained.

"If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield," said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, "and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for."

In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet's visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his library. He had entertained hopes of being admitted to a sight of the young ladies, of whose beauty he had heard much; but he saw only the father. The ladies were somewhat more fortunate, for they had the advantage of ascertaining from an upper window that he wore a blue coat, and rode a black horse.

An invitation to dinner was soon afterwards dispatched; and already had Mrs. Bennet planned the courses that were to do credit to her housekeeping, when an answer arrived which deferred it all. Mr. Bingley was obliged to be in town the following day, and consequently unable to accept the honor of their invitation, etc. Mrs. Bennet was quite disconcerted. She could not imagine what business he could have in town so soon after his arrival in Hertfordshire; and

she began to fear that he might be always flying about from one place to another, and never settled at Netherfield as he ought to be. Lady Lucas quieted her fears a little by starting the idea of his being gone to London only to get a large party for the ball; and a report soon followed that Mr. Bingley was to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly. The girls grieved over such a number of ladies; but were comforted the day before the ball by hearing, that instead of twelve, he had brought only six with him from London, his five sisters and a cousin. And when the party entered the assembly room, it consisted of only five altogether—Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, the husband of the eldest, and another young man.

Mr. Bingley was good-looking and gentleman-like; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners. His sisters were fine women, with an air of decided fashion. His brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst, merely looked the gentleman; but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien, and the report, which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity: for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.

Mr. Bingley had soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room; he was

lively and unreserved, danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early, and talked of giving one himself at Netherfield. Such amiable qualities must speak for themselves. What a contrast between him and his friend! Mr. Darcy danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party. His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. Amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet, whose dislike of his general behavior was sharpened into particular resentment by his having slighted one of her daughters.

Elizabeth Bennet had been obliged, by the scarcity of gentlemen, to sit down for two dances; and during part of that time, Mr. Darcy had been standing near enough for her to overhear a conversation between him and Mr. Bingley, who came from the dance for a few minutes, to press his friend to join it.

"Come, Darcy," said he, "I must have you dance. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance."

"I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with."

"I would not be so fastidious as you are," cried Bingley, "for a kingdom! Upon my honor, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty."

"*You* are dancing with the only handsome girl in

the room," said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

"Oh, she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I daresay very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you."

"Which do you mean?" and turning round, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own, and coldly said, "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt *me;* and I am in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me."

Mr. Bingley followed his advice. Mr. Darcy walked off; and Elizabeth remained, with no very cordial feelings towards him. She told the story, however, with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous.

The evening altogether passed off pleasantly to the whole family. Mrs. Bennet had seen her eldest daughter much admired by the Netherfield party. Mr. Bingley had danced with her twice, and she had been distinguished by his sisters. Jane was as much gratified by this as her mother could be, though in a quieter way. Elizabeth felt Jane's pleasure. Mary had heard herself mentioned to Miss Bingley as the most accomplished girl in the neighborhood; and Catherine and Lydia had been fortunate enough to be never without partners, which was all that they had yet learned to care for at a ball. They returned, therefore, in good spirits to Longbourn, the village where they lived, and of which they were the principal inhabitants. They found Mr. Bennet still up. With a book he was regardless of time; and on the

present occasion he had a good deal of curiosity as to the event of an evening which had raised such splendid expectations. He had rather hoped that all his wife's views on the stranger would be disappointed, but he soon found that he had a very different story to hear.

"Oh! my dear Mr. Bennet," as she entered the room, "we have had a most delightful evening, a most excellent ball. I wish you had been there. Jane was so admired, nothing could be like it. Everybody said how well she looked; and Mr. Bingley thought her quite beautiful, and danced with her twice! Only think of *that,* my dear; he actually danced with her twice! and she was the only creature in the room that he asked a second time. First of all, he asked Miss Lucas. I was so vexed to see him stand up with her! but, however, he did not admire her at all; indeed, nobody can, you know; and he seemed quite struck with Jane as she was going down the dance. So he inquired who she was, and got introduced, and asked her for the two next. Then the two third he danced with Miss King, and the two fourth with Maria Lucas, and the two fifth with Jane again, and the two sixth with Lizzie and the Boulanger."

"If he had had any compassion for *me,*" cried her husband impatiently, "he would not have danced half so much! For God's sake, say no more of his partners. Oh! that he had sprained his ankle in the first dance!"

"Oh! my dear," continued Mrs. Bennet, "I am quite delighted with him. He is so excessively handsome! and his sisters are charming women. I never in my life saw anything more elegant than their dresses. I dare say the lace upon Mrs. Hurst's gown ——"

Here she was interrupted again. Mr. Bennet

protested against any description of finery. She was therefore obliged to seek another branch of the subject, and related, with much bitterness of spirit and some exaggeration, the shocking rudeness of Mr. Darcy.

"But I can assure you," she added, "that Lizzie does not lose much by not suiting *his* fancy; for he is a most disagreeable, horrid man, not at all worth pleasing. So high and so conceited that there was no enduring him! He walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so very great! Not handsome enough to dance with! I wish you had been there, my dear, to have given him one of your set-downs. I quite detest the man."

The snob, the Rev. Mr. Collins, condescends to propose to Elizabeth Bennet.

THE next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr. Collins made his declaration in form. Having resolved to do it without loss of time, as his leave of absence extended only to the following Saturday, and having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner, with all the observances which he supposed a regular part of the business. On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words:

"May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honor of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?"

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered:

"Oh dear! Yes, certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy; I am sure she can have no objection.—

Come, Kitty; I want you upstairs." And gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out:

"Dear ma'am, do not go. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself."

"No, no; nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you will stay where you are." And upon Elizabeth's seeming really, with vexed and embarrassed looks, about to escape, she added, "Lizzy, I *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins."

Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction; and a moment's consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible, she sat down again, and tried to conceal, by incessant employment, the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion. Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr. Collins began.

"Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying, and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did."

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn com-

posure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him further, and he continued,—

"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly, which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honor of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss De Bourgh's footstool—that she said, 'Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman, for *my* sake and for your *own,* let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.' Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favor of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighborhood, where, I assure you, there are many amiable young women.

But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honored father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible when the melancholy event takes place which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with, and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents., which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent, and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honor of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favor; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins, very gravely; "but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honor of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her,—

"When I do myself the honor of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favorable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established cus-

tom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

"Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth, with some warmth, "you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

"You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these:—It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favor; and you should take it into farther consideration that, in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

"I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretension whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honor you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect

forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart."

"You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; "and I am persuaded that, when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew, determined that, if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behavior at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

The Rev. Mr. Collins, whom Elizabeth rejected, having learned that Elizabeth's sister has eloped with a lover whose intentions are apparently not honorable, writes Mr. Bennet the following letter of "consolation":

"My dear Sir,—I feel myself called upon, by our relationship, and my situation in life, to condole with you on the grievous affliction you are now suffering under, of which we were yesterday informed by a letter from Hertfordshire. Be assured, my dear sir, that Mrs. Collins and myself sincerely sympathize with you, and all your respectable family, in your present distress, which must be of the bitterest kind, because proceeding from a cause which no time can remove. No arguments shall be wanting on my part that can alleviate so severe a misfortune, or that may comfort you, under a circumstance that must be, of all others, most afflicting to

a parent's mind. The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this. And it is the more to be lamented, because there is reason to suppose, as my dear Charlotte informs me, that this licentiousness of behavior in your daughter has proceeded from a faulty degree of indulgence; though, at the same time, for the consolation of yourself and Mrs. Bennet, I am inclined to think that her own disposition must be naturally bad, or she could not be guilty of such an enormity at so early an age. Howsoever that may be, you are grievously to be pitied, in which opinion I am not only joined by Mrs. Collins, but likewise by Lady Catherine and her daughter, to whom I have related the affair. They agree with me in apprehending that this false step in one daughter will be injurious to the fortunes of all the others; for who, as Lady Catherine herself condescendingly says, will connect themselves with such a family? And this consideration leads me, moreover, to reflect, with augmented satisfaction, on a certain event of last November; for had it been otherwise, I must have been involved in all your sorrow and disgrace. Let me advise you, then, my dear sir, to console yourself as much as possible, to throw off your unworthy child from your affection forever, and leave her to reap the fruits of her own heinous offence.—I am, dear sir," etc., etc.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh tries to prevent Elizabeth's engagement with Mr. Darcy.

One morning, about a week after Bingley's engagement with Jane had been formed, as he and the females of the family were sitting together in the dining-room, their attention was suddenly drawn to the window by the sound of a carriage, and they

perceived a chaise and four driving up the lawn. It was too early in the morning for visitors, and besides, the equipage did not answer to that of any of their neighbors. The horses were post; and neither the carriage, nor the livery of the servant who preceded it, was familiar to them. As it was certain, however, that somebody was coming, Bingley instantly prevailed on Miss Bennet to avoid the confinement of such an intrusion, and walk away with him into the shrubbery. They both set off, and the conjectures of the remaining three continued, though with little satisfaction, till the door was thrown open, and their visitor entered. It was Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

They were, of course, all intending to be surprised; but their astonishment was beyond their expectation, and on the part of Mrs. Bennet and Kitty, though she was perfectly unknown to them, even inferior to what Elizabeth felt.

She entered the room with an air more than usually ungracious, made no other reply to Elizabeth's salutation than a slight inclination of the head, and sat down without saying a word. Elizabeth had mentioned her name to her mother on her ladyship's entrance, though no request of introduction had been made.

Mrs. Bennet, all amazement, though flattered by having a guest of such high importance, received her with the utmost politeness. After sitting for a moment in silence, she said, very stiffly to Elizabeth—

"I hope you are well, Miss Bennet. That lady, I suppose, is your mother?"

Elizabeth replied very concisely that she was.

"And *that*, I suppose, is one of your sisters?"

"Yes, madam," said Mrs. Bennet, delighted to speak to a Lady Catherine. "She is my youngest girl but one, my youngest of all is lately married;

and my eldest is somewhere about the grounds, walking with a young man, who, I believe, will soon become a part of the family."

"You have a very small park here," returned Lady Catherine after a short silence.

"It is nothing in comparison of Rosings, my lady, I dare say; but, I assure you, it is much larger than Sir William Lucas's."

"This must be a most inconvenient sitting-room for the evening in summer: the windows are full west."

Mrs. Bennet assured her that they never sat there after dinner, and then added—

"May I take the liberty of asking your ladyship whether you left Mr. and Mrs. Collins well?"

"Yes, very well. I saw them the night before last."

Elizabeth now expected that she would produce a letter for her from Charlotte, as it seemed the only probable motive for her calling. But no letter appeared, and she was completely puzzled.

Mrs. Bennet, with great civility, begged her ladyship to take some refreshment; but Lady Catherine very resolutely, and not very politely, declined eating anything; and then rising up, said to Elizabeth—

"Miss Bennet, there seemed to be a prettyish kind of a little wilderness on one side of your lawn. I should be glad to take a turn in it, if you will favor me with your company."

"Go, my dear," cried her mother, "and show her ladyship about the different walks. I think she will be pleased with the hermitage."

Elizabeth obeyed, and running into her own room for her parasol, attended her noble guest downstairs. As they passed through the hall, Lady Catherine opened the doors into the dining-parlor and drawing-

room, and pronouncing them, after a short survey, to be decent-looking rooms, walked on.

Her carriage remained at the door, and Elizabeth saw that her waiting-woman was in it. They proceeded in silence along the gravel walk that led to the copse: Elizabeth was determined to make no effort for conversation with a woman who was now more than usually insolent and disagreeable.

"How could I ever think her like her nephew?" said she, as she looked in her face.

As soon as they entered the copse, Lady Catherine began in the following manner:—

"You can be at no loss, Miss Bennet, to understand the reason of my journey hither. Your own heart, your own conscience, must tell you why I come."

Elizabeth looked with unaffected astonishment.

"Indeed, you are mistaken, madam: I have not been at all able to account for the honor of seeing you here."

"Miss Bennet," replied her ladyship, in an angry tone, "you ought to know that I am not to be trifled with. But however insincere *you* may choose to be, you shall not find *me* so. My character has ever been celebrated for its sincerity and frankness, and in a cause of such moment as this I shall certainly not depart from it. A report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that not only your sister was on the point of being most advantageously married, but that *you,* that Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united to my nephew, my own nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I *know* it must be a scandalous falsehood—though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you."

"If you believed it impossible to be true," said Elizabeth, coloring with astonishment and disdain, "I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far. What could your ladyship propose by it?"

"At once to insist upon having such a report universally contradicted."

"Your coming to Longbourn, to see me and my family," said Elizabeth coolly, "will be rather a confirmation of it; if, indeed, such a report is in existence."

"If! do you, then, pretend to be ignorant of it? Has it not been industriously circulated by yourselves? Do you not know that such a report is spread abroad?"

"I never heard that it was."

"And can you likewise declare, that there is no *foundation* for it?"

"I do not pretend to possess equal frankness with your ladyship. *You* may ask questions, which *I* shall not choose to answer."

"This is not to be borne! Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?"

"Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible."

"It ought to be so; it must be so, while he retains the use of his reason. But *your* arts and allurements may, in a moment of infatuation, have made him forget what he owes to himself and to all his family. You may have drawn him in."

"If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it."

"Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? I have not been accustomed to such language as this. I am almost the nearest relation he has in the world, and am entitled to know all his dearest concerns."

"But you are not entitled to know *mine;* nor will such behavior as this ever induce me to be explicit."

"Let me be rightly understood. This match, to

which you have the presumption to aspire, can never take place. No, never. Mr. Darcy is engaged to *my daughter*. Now what have you to say?"

"Only this: that if he is so, you can have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me."

Lady Catherine hesitated for a moment, and then replied:

"The engagement between them is of a peculiar kind. From their infancy they have been intended for each other. It was the favorite wish of *his* mother as well as of hers. While in their cradles we planned the union; and now, at the moment when the wishes of both sisters would be accomplished, in their marriage, to be prevented by a young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world, and wholly unallied to the family! Do you pay no regard to the wishes of his friends—to his tacit engagement with Miss De Bourgh? Are you lost to every feeling of propriety and delicacy? Have you not heard me say that from his earliest hours he was destined for his cousin?"

"Yes; and I had heard it before. But what is that to me? If there is no other objection to my marrying your nephew, I shall certainly not be kept from it by knowing that his mother and aunt wished him to marry Miss De Bourgh. You both did as much as you could in planning the marriage. Its completion depended on others. If Mr. Darcy is neither by honor nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is not he to make another choice? And if I am that choice, why may not I accept him?"

"Because honor, decorum, prudence, nay interest, forbid it. Yes, Miss Bennet, interest; for do not expect to be noticed by his family or friends if you wilfully act against the inclinations of all. You will be censured, slighted, and despised by every one connected with him. Your alliance will be a disgrace;

your name will never even be mentioned by any of us."

"These are heavy misfortunes," replied Elizabeth. "But the wife of Mr. Darcy must have such extraordinary sources of happiness necessarily attached to her situation, that she could, upon the whole, have no cause to repine."

"Obstinate, headstrong girl! I am ashamed of you! Is this your gratitude for my attentions to you last spring? Is nothing due to me on that score? Let us sit down. You are to understand, Miss Bennet, that I came here with the determined resolution of carrying my purpose; nor will I be dissuaded from it. I have not been used to submit to any person's whims. I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment."

"*That* will make your ladyship's situation at present more pitiable; but it will have no effect on *me*."

"I will not be interrupted! Hear me in silence. My daughter and my nephew are formed for each other. They are descended, on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and, on the father's, from respectable, honorable, and ancient, though untitled families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid. They are destined for each other by the voice of every member of their respective houses; and what is to divide them? The upstart pretensions of a young woman without family, connections, or fortune. Is this to be endured? But it must not, shall not be! If you were sensible of your own good, you would not wish to quit the sphere in which you have been brought up."

"In marrying your nephew I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter: so far we are equal."

"True. You *are* a gentleman's daughter. But who was your mother? Who are your uncles and

aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition."

"Whatever my connections may be," said Elizabeth, "if your nephew does not object to them, they can be nothing to *you*."

"Tell me, once for all, are you engaged to him?"

Though Elizabeth would not, for the mere purpose of obliging Lady Catherine, have answered this question, she could not but say, after a moment's deliberation, "I am not."

Lady Catherine seemed pleased.

"And will you promise me never to enter into such an engagement?"

"I will make no promise of the kind."

"Miss Bennet, I am shocked and astonished. I expected to find a more reasonable young woman. But do not deceive yourself into a belief that I will ever recede. I shall not go away till you have given me the assurance I require."

"And I certainly *never* shall give it. I am not to be intimidated into anything so wholly unreasonable. Your ladyship wants Mr. Darcy to marry your daughter; but would my giving you the wished-for promise make *their* marriage at all more probable? Supposing him to be attached to me, would *my* refusing to accept his hand make him wish to bestow it on his cousin? Allow me to say, Lady Catherine, that the arguments with which you have supported this extraordinary application have been as frivolous as the application was ill-judged. You have widely mistaken my character if you think I can be worked on by such persuasions as these. How far your nephew might approve of your interference in *his* affairs I cannot tell, but you have certainly no right to concern yourself in mine. I must beg, therefore, to be importuned no farther on the subject."

"Not so hasty, if you please. I have by no means

done. To all the objections I have already urged I have still another to add. I am no stranger to the particulars of your youngest sister's infamous elopement. I know it all—that the young man's marrying her was a patched-up business, at the expense of your father and uncle. And is *such* a girl to be my nephew's sister? Is *her* husband, who is the son of his late father's steward, to be his brother? Heaven and earth! of what are you thinking? Are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted?"

"You can *now* have nothing farther to say," she resentfully answered. "You have insulted me in every possible method. I must beg to return to the house."

And she rose as she spoke. Lady Catherine rose also, and they turned back. Her ladyship was highly incensed.

"You have no regard, then, for the honor and credit of my nephew! Unfeeling, selfish girl! Do you not consider that a connection with you must disgrace him in the eyes of everybody?"

"Lady Catherine, I have nothing farther to say. You know my sentiments."

"You are then resolved to have him?"

"I have said no such thing. I am only resolved to act in that manner which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to *you,* or to any person so wholly unconnected with me."

"It is well. You refuse, then, to oblige me. You refuse to obey the claims of duty, honor, and gratitude. You are determined to ruin him in the opinion of all his friends, and make him the contempt of the world."

"Neither duty, nor honor, nor gratitude," replied Elizabeth, "have any possible claim on me in the present instance. No principle of either would be violated by my marriage with Mr. Darcy. And with

regard to the resentment of his family or the indignation of the world, if the former *were* excited by his marrying me, it would not give me one moment's concern—and the world in general would have too much sense to join in the scorn."

"And this is your real opinion! This is your final resolve! Very well. I shall now know how to act. Do not imagine, Miss Bennet, that your ambition will ever be gratified. I came to try you. I hoped to find you reasonable; but, depend upon it, I will carry my point."

In this manner Lady Catherine talked on, till they were at the door of the carriage, when, turning hastily round, she added—

"I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet. I send no compliments to your mother. You deserve no such attention. I am most seriously displeased."

Elizabeth made no answer, and, without attempting to persuade her ladyship to return into the house, walked quietly into it herself. She heard the carriage drive away as she proceeded upstairs. Her mother impatiently met her at the door of the dressing-room, to ask why Lady Catherine would not come in again and rest herself.

"She did not choose it," said her daughter; "she would go."

"She is a very fine-looking woman! and her calling here was prodigiously civil! for she only came, I suppose, to tell us the Collinses were well. She is on her road somewhere, I dare say, and so, passing through Meryton, thought she might as well call on you. I suppose she had nothing particular to say to you, Lizzy?"

Elizabeth was forced to give into a little falsehood here; for to acknowledge the substance of their conversation was impossible.

ROBERT SOUTHEY
1774-1843

In his youth, Southey, a friend of Wordsworth and of Coleridge, and a brother-in-law of the latter, was an ardent reformer. His pacifism of that period is shown in *The Battle of Blenheim.* Fifteen years later he glorified England's greatest naval hero, Lord Nelson, in what is one of the best short biographies. In his own view, the apparent inconsistency was the justifiable consequence of the course of historical events: the France which in his early years he believed to stand for peace and democracy having, under Napoleon, become a militaristic autocracy.

Southey's early ambition was to become an epic poet. He wrote much verse, and during the last thirty years of his life was Poet Laureate. But today his epics are unread, and his place in English literature is more and more seen to depend upon his prose writings. Of these the most notable, besides the *Nelson* (1813), are his lives of *John Wesley* (1820) and *John Bunyan* (1830), and his *History of the Peninsular War* (1823-32). In such works he admirably displayed the sincerity and gravity of his character, his perspicuity, and his scholarship. Even Byron, who in *The Vision of Judgment* excoriated Southey for his politics, said, "His prose is perfect."

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

It was a summer evening,
  Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
  Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
  Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet

In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And, with a natural sigh,
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory.

"I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out!
For many a thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in that great victory."

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
"Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out;
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory.

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;

So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

"With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby died;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

"Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene."
"Why 'twas a very wicked thing!"
Said little Wilhelmine.
"Nay, nay, my little girl," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory.

"And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."
"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why that I cannot tell," said he.
"But 'twas a famous victory."

1798 1798

THE DEATH OF LORD NELSON

IN THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

Soon after daylight Nelson came upon deck. The 21st of October was a festival in his family, because

on that day his uncle, Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought,* with two other line-of-battle ships, had beaten off a French squadron of four sail of the line and three frigates. Nelson, with that sort of superstition from which few persons are entirely exempt, had more than once expressed his persuasion that this was to be the day of his battle also; and he was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified. The wind was now from the west,—light breezes, with a long heavy swell. Signal was made to bear down upon the enemy in two lines; and the fleet set all sail. Collingwood, in the *Royal Sovereign,* led the lee-line of thirteen ships; the *Victory* led the weather-line of fourteen. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin, and wrote the following prayer:—

"May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it! and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet! For myself individually, I commit my life to Him that made me, and may His blessing alight on my endeavors for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is intrusted to me to defend. Amen, Amen, Amen." . . .

Blackwood went on board the *Victory* about six. He found him in good spirits, but very calm; not in that exhilaration which he had felt upon entering into battle at Aboukir and Copenhagen; he knew that his own life would be particularly aimed at, and seems to have looked for death with almost as sure an expectation as for victory. His whole attention was fixed upon the enemy. They tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack; thus bringing the shoals of Trafalgar and St. Pedro under the lee of the British, and keeping the port of

Cadiz open for themselves. This was judiciously done: and Nelson, aware of all the advantages which it gave them, made signal to prepare to anchor.

Villeneuve was a skilful seaman, worthy of serving a better master and a better cause. His plan of defence was as well conceived, and as original, as the plan of attack. He formed the fleet in a double line, every alternate ship being about a cable's length to windward of her second head and astern. Nelson, certain of a triumphant issue to the day, asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. That officer answered that, considering the handsome way in which battle was offered by the enemy, their apparent determination for a fair trial of strength, and the situation of the land, he thought it would be a glorious result if fourteen were captured. He replied: "I shall not be satisfied with less than twenty." Soon afterwards he asked him if he did not think there was a signal wanting. Captain Blackwood made answer that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. These words were scarcely spoken before that signal was made which will be remembered as long as the language or even the memory of England shall endure—Nelson's last signal: "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY!" It was received throughout the fleet with a shout of answering acclamation, made sublime by the spirit which it breathed and the feeling which it expressed. "Now," said Lord Nelson, "I can do no more. We must trust to the great Disposer of all events and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty."

He wore that day, as usual, his Admiral's frock-coat, bearing on the left breast four stars of the different orders with which he was invested. Orna-

ments which rendered him so conspicuous a mark for the enemy were beheld with ominous apprehensions by his officers. It was known that there were riflemen on board the French ships, and it could not be doubted but that his life would be particularly aimed at. They communicated their fears to each other, and the surgeon, Mr. Beatty, spoke to the chaplain, Dr. Scott, and to Mr. Scott, the public secretary, desiring that some person would entreat him to change his dress or cover the stars; but they knew that such a request would highly displease him. "In honor I gained them," he had said when such a thing had been hinted to him formerly, "and in honor I will die with them." Mr. Beatty, however, would not have been deterred by any fear of exciting displeasure from speaking to him himself upon a subject in which the weal of England, as well as the life of Nelson, was concerned; but he was ordered from the deck before he could find an opportunity. This was a point upon which Nelson's officers knew that it was hopeless to remonstrate or reason with him; but both Blackwood and his own captain, Hardy, represented to him how advantageous to the fleet it would be for him to keep out of action as long as possible; and he consented at last to let the *Leviathan* and the *Téméraire*, which were sailing abreast of the *Victory*, be ordered to pass ahead. Yet even here the last infirmity of this noble mind was indulged; for these ships could not pass ahead if the *Victory* continued to carry all her sail; and so far was Nelson from shortening sail, that it was evident he took pleasure in pressing on, and rendering it impossible for them to obey his own orders. A long swell was setting into the Bay of Cadiz: our ships, crowding all sail, moved majestically before it, with light winds from the south-

west. The sun shone on the sails of the enemy; and their well-formed line, with their numerous three-deckers, made an appearance which any other assailants would have thought formidable; but the British sailors only admired the beauty and the splendor of the spectacle; and, in full confidence of winning what they saw, remarked to each other, what a fine sight yonder ships would make at Spithead!

1813

THOMAS CAMPBELL
1777-1844

THE expression of the spirit of nationalism and patriotism is a marked feature of the Romantic Movement, as seen especially in Scott, Wordsworth, and Southey. The particular contribution which Thomas Campbell made to this stream was his war-songs, the best of their kind in English poetry. Of these *Ye Mariners of England* is the most famous. Almost as well known are *Hohenlinden* and *The Battle of the Baltic.*

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

A NAVAL ODE

I

Ye Mariners of England,
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze—
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe!

And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow,—
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

II

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave!
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave.
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell,
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow,—
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

III

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak,
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow,—
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

IV

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart,

And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow,—
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

1799–1800 1801

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR
1775-1864

In his chief works,—*Imaginary Conversations* (1824-1853), *Pericles and Aspasia* (1836), and the *Pentameron* (1837),—Landor re-animated the past in such characters and sentiments as seemed to him to express the highest possibilities of human experience. Thus, although he is rarely thought of in connection with Sir Walter Scott, his function was similar to that of the great historical novelist. Landor, however, was less interested than Scott in dramatic action; on the other hand, he was less preoccupied than Scott with purely British history. He lived much in Italy, and the early history and culture of the Mediterranean peoples fascinated him.

Landor was one of those men who, though personally prone to outbursts of violent temper, recognize in moderation and self-control two of the noblest human virtues; and, although his life was vexed by quarrels, his works are full of calmness and self-restraint. The other virtues that he chiefly admired were fortitude and compassion. His political principles were democratic: he hated Napoleon and he admired Washington. He believed the Periclean age in Greece one of the high points in the history of civilization, because its laws were made by the people and because local self-government obtained. In Pericles and Aspasia he also admired a noble type of love,—a love which was pure and unselfish, a love which set the claims of duty and of patriotism even higher than its own passionate desires.

Landor also wrote exquisite poetry, in which his courtesy

to women and his fondness for children and for flowers found utterance. Unquestionably one of the greatest Romantics, he is the least popular among them because his style is so restrained and because his substance, really of the highest interest, can hardly be appreciated without a more than common knowledge of history.

From PERICLES AND ASPASIA

Pericles to Aspasia

Do you love me? do you love me? Stay, reason upon it, sweet Aspasia! doubt, hesitate, question, drop it, take it up again, provide, raise obstacles, reply directly. Oracles are sacred, and there is a pride in being a diviner.

Aspasia to Pericles

I will do none of those things you tell me to do; but I will say something you forgot to say, about the insufficiency of Phidias.

He may represent a hero with unbent brows, a sage with the lyre of Poetry in his hand, Ambition with her face half-averted from the City, but he cannot represent, in the same sculpture, at the same distance, Aphrodite higher than Pallas. He would be derided if he did; and a great man can never do that for which a little man may deride him.

I shall love you even more than I do, if you will love yourself more than me. Did ever lover talk so? Pray tell me, for I have forgotten all they ever talked about. But, Pericles! Pericles! be careful to lose nothing of your glory, or you lose all that can be lost of me; my pride, my happiness, my content; everything but my poor weak love; keep glory then for my sake!

Aspasia to Pericles

When the war is over, as surely it must be in another year, let us sail among the islands of the Ægaean, and be young as ever. O that it were permitted us to pass together the remainder of our lives in privacy and retirement! This is never to be hoped for in Athens.

I inherit from my mother a small yet beautiful house in Tenos: I remember it well. Water, clear and cold, ran before the vestibule: a sycamore shaded the whole building. I think Tenos must be nearer to Athens than to Miletus. Could we not go now for a few days? How temperate was the air, how serene the sky, how beautiful the country! the people how quiet, how gentle, how kind-hearted!

Is there any station so happy as an uncontested place in a small community, where manners are simple, where wants are few, where respect is the tribute of probity, and love is the guerdon of beneficence. O Pericles! let us go; we can return at any time.

Aspasia to Pericles

Now the fever is raging, and we are separated, my comfort and delight is in our little Pericles. The letters you send me come less frequently, but I know you write whenever your duties will allow you, and whenever men are found courageous enough to take charge of them. Although you preserved with little care the speeches you delivered formerly, yet you promised me a copy of the latter, and as many of the earlier as you could collect among your friends. Let me have them as soon as possible. Whatever

bears the traces of your hand is precious to me: how greatly more precious what is imprest with your genius, what you have meditated and spoken! I shall see your calm thoughtful face while I am reading, and will be cautious not to read aloud lest I lose the illusion of your voice.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES

Gratitude to the immortal Gods overpowers every other impulse of my breast. You are safe.

Pericles! O my Pericles! come into this purer air! live life over again in the smiles of your child, in the devotion of your Aspasia! Why did you fear for me the plague within the city, the Spartans round it? why did you exact the vow at parting, that nothing but your command should recall me again to Athens? Why did I ever make it? Cruel! to refuse me the full enjoyment of your recovered health! crueller to keep me in ignorance of its decline! The happiest of pillows is not that which Love first presses; it is that which Death has frowned on and passed over.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES

Where on earth is there so much society as in a beloved child? He accompanies me in my walks, gazes into my eyes for what I am gathering from books, tells me more and better things than they do, and asks me often what neither I nor they can answer. When he is absent I am filled with reflections, when he is present I have room for none beside what I receive from him. The charms of his childhood bring me back to the delights of mine, and I fancy I hear my own words in a sweeter voice. Will he (O how I tremble at the mute Oracle of futurity!)

will he ever be as happy as I have been? Alas! and must he ever be as subject to fears and apprehensions? No; thanks to the gods! never, never. He carries his father's heart within his breast. I see him already an orator and a leader. I try to teach him daily some of his father's looks and gestures, and I never smile but at his docility and gravity. How his father will love him! the little thunderer! the winner of cities! the vanquisher of Cleones!

Pericles to Aspasia

The pestilence has taken from me both my sons. You, who were ever so kind and affectionate to them, will receive a tardy recompense, in hearing that the least gentle and the least grateful did acknowledge it.

I mourn for Paralus, because he loved me; for Xanthippos because he loved me not.

Preserve with all your maternal care our little Pericles. I cannot be fonder of him than I have always been; I can only fear more for him.

Is he not with my Aspasia? What fears then are so irrational as mine? But oh! I am living in a widowed house, a house of desolation! I am living in a city of tombs and torches! and the last I saw before me were for my children.

Pericles to Aspasia

It is right and orderly, that he who has partaken so largely in the prosperity of the Athenians, should close the procession of their calamities. The fever that has depopulated our city, returned upon me last night, and Hippocrates and Acron tell me that my end is near.

When we agreed, O Aspasia, in the beginning of our loves, to communicate our thoughts by writing, even while we were both in Athens, and when we had many reasons for it, we little foresaw the more powerful one that has rendered it necessary of late. We never can meet again. The laws forbid it, and love itself enforces them. Let wisdom be heard by you as imperturbably, and affection as authoritatively, as ever; and remember that the sorrow of Pericles can arise but from the bosom of Aspasia. There is only one word of tenderness we could say, which we have not said oftentimes before; and there is no consolation in it. The happy never say, and never hear said, farewell.

Reviewing the course of my life, it appears to me, at one moment, as if we met but yesterday; at another, as if centuries had past within it; for within it have existed the greater part of those who, since the origin of the world, have been the luminaries of the human race. Damon called me from my music to look at Aristides on his way to exile; and my father pressed the wrist by which he was leading me along, and whispered in my ear,

"Walk quickly by; glance cautiously; it is there Miltiades is in prison."

In my boyhood Pindar took me up in his arms, when he brought to our house the dirge he had composed for the funeral of my grandfather; in my adolescence I offered the rites of hospitality to Empedocles; not long afterward I embraced the neck of Æschylus, about to abandon his country. With Sophocles I have argued on eloquence; with Euripides on polity and ethics; I have discoursed, as became an inquirer, with Protagoras and Democritus, with Anaxagoras and Meton. From Herodotus I have listened to the most instructive history,

conveyed in a language the most copious and the most harmonious; a man worthy to carry away the collected suffrages of universal Greece; a man worthy to throw open the temples of Egypt, and to celebrate the exploits of Cyrus. And from Thucydides, who alone can succeed to him, how recently did my Aspasia hear with me the energetic praises of his just supremacy!

As if the festival of life were incomplete, and wanted one great ornament to crown it, Phidias placed before us, in ivory and gold, the tutelary Deity of this land, and the Zeus of Homer and Olympus.

To have lived with such men, to have enjoyed their familiarity and esteem, overpays all labors and anxieties. I were unworthy of the friendships I have commemorated, were I forgetful of the latest. Sacred it ought to be, formed as it was under the portico of Death, my friendship with the most sagacious, the most scientific, the most beneficent of philosophers, Acron and Hippocrates. If mortal could war against Pestilence and Destiny, they have been victorious. I leave them in the field: unfortunate he who finds them among the fallen!

And now, at the close of my day, when every light is dim, and every guest departed, let me own that these wane before me, remembering, as I do, in the pride and fulness of my heart, that Athens confided her glory and Aspasia her happiness to me.

Have I been a faithful guardian? do I resign them to the custody of the Gods undiminished and unimpaired? Welcome, then, welcome, my last hour! After enjoying for so great a number of years, in my public and my private life, what I believe has never been the lot of any other, I now extend my hand to the urn, and take without reluctance or hesitation what is the lot of all.

1836

THOMAS MOORE
1779-1852

THE evanescence and vanity of social triumphs are manifested in the career of Thomas Moore, whom the society of his time idolized as a great poet but whom we regard as of scarcely more than historical interest. His gifts were those of a popular song-writer. He made no original contribution to the Romantic Movement, his chief distinction being that he applied to his native country, Ireland, those principles of national independence which were found in all romantic writers.

He was a friend of Byron, the manuscript of whose unpublished memoirs was in his possession, which manuscript he destroyed. He wrote a *Life of Byron* (1830).

THE HARP THAT ONCE THROUGH TARA'S HALLS

The harp that once through Tara's halls
  The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
  As if that soul were fled.—
So sleeps the pride of former days,
  So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high for praise
  Now feel that pulse no more!

No more to chiefs and ladies bright
  The harp of Tara swells;
The chord alone that breaks at night
  Its tale of ruin tells.
Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes,
  The only throb she gives
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
  To show that still she lives.

1835

OFT, IN THE STILLY NIGHT

SCOTCH AIR

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me;
The smiles, the tears,
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimmed and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends, so linked together,
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather;
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

1815

LORD BYRON
1788-1824

THE life of Lord Byron was turbulent and dissolute. His character was affected for the worse by a strain of insanity in his family and by the violence of his mother's temper. The fact that he was lame, although otherwise strikingly handsome, increased his self-consciousness and self-pity. He gratified his sensual desires to the utmost, his licentiousness probably including the abhorrent crime of incest. To the women whom he wooed and won, he proved as a rule ungrateful and brutal. His wife left him; and English society, which had heretofore idolized him, now ostracized him. From his twenty-eighth year he was an exile, sojourning mostly in Switzerland and Italy. When the Greeks revolted against the Turks, he volunteered in the Greek service; but before he had a chance to take part in an action, he died of fever at the age of thirty-six. To contemporaries his life seemed even more romantic than his works.

Although the conduct of Byron was often reprehensible, there is no doubt that he sincerely loved the good, the true, and the beautiful. He was enthusiastic about the grander features of nature; and he loved youth, womanhood, liberty, fame, and the glories of ancient Greece and Rome. He hated tyranny and hypocrisy. The tragic fact about Byron is that, perhaps owing to the nature of his own moral experience, he was (unlike Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley) unable to discern any manifestations of the ideals that he loved in the actual life of mankind. The only happy love that he depicts, for example,—that of Haidee,—is not lived among the actualities of life but in a temporarily idyllic situation. Actual life, as this disappointed idealist saw it, was devoid of present bliss or future promise. The glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome had no modern successors. Love and happiness might visit us in youth, but the rest of life was disillusion.

The moralist may indulge his privilege of railing against Byron's sentiments; but the literary critic, even though he does not share them, must remind us that the beautiful and vigorous expression of those sentiments is justified. Byron voices, with a clarity and intensity that only genius commands, that melancholy and pessimism which are inescapable

moods of any human life that has run the gamut of experience. The youth who has not passed through the Byronic stage is unlikely to attain wisdom; for either he has not a sufficiently intense love of the ideal, or he has not sufficient powers of observation to discern that the actual falls far short of that ideal. The fortitude of Wordsworth and Landor, and the hopefulness of Shelley, are higher stages of insight; but they are unlikely to be sincerely attained without passing through the passionate despair of Lord Byron.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

I

She walks in beauty, like the night,
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

II

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

III

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

June 12, 1814 1815

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest;
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined turret wreath,

All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and
gray beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt,—or be what I have
been,
Or weep as I could once have wept o'er many a
vanished scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish
though they be,
So, midst the withered waste of life, those tears
would flow to me.

1815 1816

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

1816 1816

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

My hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears:

My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and barred—forbidden fare:
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;

We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

There are seven pillars of Gothic mold,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick walls is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain.

With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face.
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound, not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do—and did my best;
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given

To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
For him my soul was sorely moved;
And truly might it be distressed
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles, being free)—
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorred to view below.

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perished in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit withered with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf
To him his dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below,
Its massy waters meet and flow;

Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snowy-white battlement,
  Which round about the wave inthrals:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay;
We heard it ripple night and day;
  Sounding o'er our heads it knocked;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
  And then the very rock hath rocked,
  And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunters' fare,
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moistened many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mold
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,

Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died—and they unlocked his chain,
And scooped for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begged them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laughed, and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

But he, the favorite and the flower,
Most cherished since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,

I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread;
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmixed with such—but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listened, but I could not hear;
I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I called, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rushed to him:—I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived, *I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.

One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope—but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew;
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none;
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray;
It was not night, it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,

The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before;
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree,
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seemed like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity.
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile—
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal—well I knew,

For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.
A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfastened did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,

For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channeled rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as in a new-dug grave,

Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much oppressed
Had almost need of such a rest.

It might be months, or years, or days—
I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote.
At last men came to set me free;
I asked not why, and recked not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home.
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

1816

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;

And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming:

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

1816

From CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CHILDE HAROLD'S CHARACTER]

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mixed
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation; such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?

Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex, rolled
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime.

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quelled
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompelled,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebelled;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glassed by sunbeams on the lake.

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite:
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink

Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

But in man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home:
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 'twere wild,—as on the plundered wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck,—
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check.

[WATERLOO]

Stop!—for thy tread is on an empire's dust!
An earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot marked with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but *the moral's truth* tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be;—
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by thee,
Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory?

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!
How in an hour the power which gave annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
In "pride of place" here last the eagle flew!
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through;
Ambition's life and labors all were vain;
He wears the shattered links of the world's broken chain.

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
And foam in fetters;—but is Earth more free?
Did nations combat to make *one* submit;
Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?
What! shall reviving Thraldom again be
The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise!

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no more!
In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up before
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain, years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
Of roused-up millions; all that most endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.

[LAKE LEMAN]

Thy sky is changed!—and such a change! Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,

Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

And this is in the night:—Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted;
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed:
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters,—war within themselves to wage.

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:

For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around; of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath forked
His lightnings,—as if he did understand
That in such gaps as desolation worked,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurked.

Sky, mountains, rivers, winds, lake, lightning, ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
But where of ye, O tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me,—could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into *one* word,
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

[ROME]

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,

Lone mother of dead empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hilled city's pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
Where the car climbed the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, "here was, or is," where all is doubly night?

. . . . . .

I speak not of men's creeds—they rest between
Man and his Maker—but of things allowed,
Averred, and known, and daily, hourly seen:—
The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed,

And the intent of tyranny avowed,
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
The apes of him who humbled once the proud,
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne—
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourished in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst—his second fall.

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind;
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts, and still the seed we find

Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North:
So shall a better Spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

[SOLITUDE AND THE OCEAN]

Oh! that the desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye elements!—in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted—Can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war—
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou;—
Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play,
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow:
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,—
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime

Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime,
The image of Eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

My task is done, my song hath ceased, my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit
My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is writ;
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been—and my visions flit
Less palpably before me—and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell!
Ye! who have traced the pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,

If such there were—with *you,* the moral of his strain.

1817 1818

From DON JUAN

[HAIDEE]

How long in his damp trance young Juan lay
He knew not, for the earth was gone for him,
And time had nothing more of night nor day
For his congealing blood, and senses dim;
And how this heavy faintness passed away
He knew not, till each painful pulse and limb,
And tingling vein, seemed throbbing back to life,
For Death, though vanquished, still retired with strife.

His eyes he opened, shut, again unclosed,
For all was doubt and dizziness; he thought
He still was in the boat, and had but dozed,
And felt again with his despair o'erwrought,
And wished it death in which he had reposed,
And then once more his feelings back were brought,
And slowly by his swimming eyes was seen
A lovely female face of seventeen.

'Twas bending close o'er his, and the small mouth
Seemed almost prying into his for breath;
And chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
Recalled his answering spirits back from death;
And, bathing his chill temples, tried to soothe
Each pulse to animation, till beneath
Its gentle touch and trembling care, a sigh
To these kind efforts made a low reply.

Then was the cordial poured, and mantle flung
Around his scarce-clad climbs; and the fair arm
Raised higher the faint head which o'er it hung;
And her transparent cheek, all pure and warm,
Pillowed his death-like forehead; then she wrung
His dewy curls, long drenched by every storm;
And watched with eagerness each throb that drew
A sigh from his heaved bosom—and hers, too.

And lifting him with care into the cave,
The gentle girl, and her attendant,—one
Young, yet her elder, and of brow less grave,
And more robust of figure—then begun
To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave
Light to the rocks that roofed them, which the sun
Had never seen, the maid, or whatsoe'er
She was, appeared distinct, and tall, and fair.

Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair,
Her clustering hair, whose longer locks were rolled
In braids behind; and though her stature were
Even of the highest for a female mold,
They nearly reached her heel; and in her air
There was a something which bespoke command,
As one who was a lady in the land.

Her hair, I said, was auburn; but her eyes
Were black as death, their lashes the same hue,
Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
Deepest attraction; for when to the view
Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew;
'Tis as the snake late coiled, who pours his length,
And hurls at once his venom and his strength.

. . . . . .

The coast—I think it was the coast that I
Was just describing—Yes, it *was* the coast—
Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves untossed
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and little billow crossed
By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

And forth they wandered, her sire being gone,
As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had none,
Save Zoe, who, although with due precision
She waited on her lady with the sun,
Though daily service was her only mission,
Bringing warm water, wreathing her long tresses,
And asking now and then for cast-off dresses.

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all nature, hushed, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill,
Upon the other, and the rosy sky,
With one star sparkling through it like an eye.

And thus they wandered forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and hardened sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Worked by the storms, yet worked as it were planned,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turned to rest; and, each clasped by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

They looked up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the waves' splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other—and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss;

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and love,
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in concert move,
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake,—for a kiss's strength,
I think it must be reckoned by its length.

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long—no doubt they never reckoned;
And if they had, they could not have secured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken; but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other beckoned,
Which, being joined, like swarming bees they clung—
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momently grew less,
The voiceless sands, and drooping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.

They feared no eyes nor ears on that lone beach,
They felt no terrors from the night; they were
All in all to each other; though their speech
Was broken words, they *thought* a language there,—
And all the burning tongues the passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle—first love,—that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.

. . . . . .

Alas! the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone,
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

They are right; for man, to man so oft unjust,
Is always so to women; one sole bond
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage—and what rests beyond?
A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's over.

Some take a lover, some take drams or prayers,
Some mind their household, others dissipation,
Some run away, and but exchange their cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous station;
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Theirs being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

Haidée was Nature's bride, and knew not this:
Haidée was Passion's child, born where the sun
Showers triple light, and scorches even the kiss
Of his gazelle-eyed daughters; she was one
Made but to love, to feel that she was his
Who was her chosen: what was said or done
Elsewhere was nothing. She had nought to fear,
Hope, care, nor love beyond,—her heart beat *here*.

And oh! that quickening of the heart, that beat!
How much it costs us! yet each rising throb
Is in its cause as its effect so sweet,
That Wisdom, ever on the watch to rob
Joy of its alchemy, and to repeat
Fine truths; even Conscience, too, has a tough job
To make us understand each good old maxim,
So good—I wonder Castlereagh don't tax 'em.

And now 'twas done—on the lone shore were plighted
Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial torches, shed
Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted:
Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed,
By their own feelings hallowed and united,
Their priest was Solitude, and they were wed:
And they were happy, for to their young eyes
Each was an angel, and earth paradise.

1818–19 1819

[THE ISLES OF GREECE]

I

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,

Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse:
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."

3

The mountains look on Marathon—
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free,
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations;—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they?

5

And where are they? and where art thou
My country? On thy voiceless shore

The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

6

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though linked among a fettered race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

7

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

8

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come!"
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!

Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;

And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells:
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

1819–20 1821

[DON JUAN IN ENGLAND]

Juan knew several languages—as well
He might—and brought them up with skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplished belle,
Who still regretted that he did not rhyme.

There wanted but this requisite to swell
His qualities (with them) into sublime:
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia Mannish,
Both longed extremely to be sung in Spanish.

However, he did pretty well, and was
Admitted as an aspirant to all
The coteries, and, as in Banquo's glass,
At great assemblies or in parties small,
He saw ten thousand living authors pass,
That being about their average numeral;
Also the eighty "greatest living poets,"
As every paltry magazine can show *its*.

In twice five years the "greatest living poet,"
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is called on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 'tis an imaginary thing,
Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king—
Was reckoned, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain:
La Belle Alliance of dunces down at zero,
Now that the Lion's fallen, may rise again:
But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;
Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

Sir Walter reigned before me; Moore and Campbell
Before and after: but now grown more holy,
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly:

And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
A modern Ancient Pistol—"by these hilts"!

Then there's my gentle Euphues, who, they say,
Sets up for being a sort of *moral me;*
He'll find it rather difficult some day
To turn out both, or either, it may be.
Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway;
And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three;
And that deep-mouth'd Bœotian "Savage Landor"
Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

John Keats, who was killed off by one critique,
Just as he really promised something great,
If not intelligible, without Greek
Contrived to talk about the gods of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
'Tis strange the mind, that fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuffed out by an article.

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders
To that which none will gain—or none will know
The conqueror at least; who, ere Time renders
His last award, will have the long grass grow
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.
If I might augur, I should rate but low
Their chances;—they're too numerous, like the thirty
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals waxed but dirty.

This is the literary *lower* empire,
Where the prætorian bands take up the matter;—
A "dreadful trade," like his who "gathers samphire,"
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,

With the same feelings as you'd coax a vampire.
Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,
I'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
Their flanks;—but it is hardly worth my while
With such small gear to give myself concern:
Indeed I've not the necessary bile;
My natural temper's really aught but stern,
And even my Muse's worst reproof's a smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,
And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
Amongst live poets and *blue* ladies, passed
With some small profit through that field so sterile,
Being tired in time, and neither least nor last,
Left it before he had been treated very ill;
And henceforth found himself more gaily classed
Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
The sun's true son, no vapor, but a ray.

His morns he passed in business—which dissected,
Was like all business, a laborious nothing
That leads to lassitude, the most infected
And Centaur Nessus garb of mortal clothing,
And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,
And talk in tender horrors of our loathing
All kinds of toil, save for our country's good—
Which grows no better, though 'tis time it should.

His afternoons he passed in visits, luncheons,
Lounging, and boxing; and the twilight hour
In riding round those vegetable puncheons
Called "Parks," where there is neither fruit nor flower

Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;
But after all it is the only "bower"
(In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world!
Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar
Through street and square fast flashing chariots hurled
Like harnessed meteors; then along the floor
Chalk mimics painting; then festoons are twirled;
Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand happy few
An earthly Paradise of *Or Molu*.

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall sink
With the three-thousandths curtsy; there the waltz,
The only dance which teaches girls to think,
Makes one in love even with its very faults.
Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their brink,
And long the latest of arrivals halts,
'Midst royal dukes and dames condemned to climb,
And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

Thrice happy he who, after a survey
Of the good company, can win a corner,
A door that's *in* or boudoir *out* of the way,
Where he may fix himself like small "Jack Horner,"
And let the Babel round run as it may,
And look on as a mourner, or a scorner,
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,
Yawning a little as the night grows later.

But this won't do, save by and by; and he
Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share,
Must steer with care through all that glittering sea
Of gems and plumes and pearls and silks, to where
He deems it is his proper place to be;
Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,
Or proudlier prancing with mercurial skill,
Where Science marshals forth her own quadrille.

Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views
Upon an heiress or his neighbor's bride,
Let him take care that that which he pursues
Is not at once too palpably descried.
Full many an eager gentleman oft rues
His haste; impatience is a blundering guide,
Amongst a people famous for reflection,
Who like to play the fool with circumspection.

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper;
Or if forestalled, get opposite and ogle:—
Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper
In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,
Which sits for ever upon memory's crupper,
The ghost of vanished pleasures once in vogue!
Ill
Can tender souls relate the rise and fall
Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.

But these precautionary hints can touch
Only the common run, who must pursue,
And watch, and ward; whose plans a word too much
Or little overturns; and not the few
Or many (for the number's sometimes such)
Whom a good mien, especially if new,
Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense, or nonsense,
Permits what'er they please, or *did* not long since.

Our hero, as a hero, young and handsome,
Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,
Like other slaves of course must pay his ransom,
Before he can escape from so much danger
As will environ a conspicuous man. Some
Talk about poetry, and "rack and manger,"
And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble;—
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

They are young, but know not youth—it is anticipated;
Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;
Their vigor in a thousand arms is dissipated;
Their cash comes *from,* their wealth goes *to* a Jew;
Both senates see their nightly votes participated
Between the tyrant's and the tribunes' crew;
And having voted, dined, drunk, gamed, and whored,
The family vault receives another lord.

1822–23 1823

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;

No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor ***now,***
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through ***whom***
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honorable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

1824 1824

STANZAS WRITTEN ON THE ROAD BETWEEN FLORENCE AND PISA

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;
The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'Tis but as a dead-flower with May-dew besprinkled.
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give glory!

O fame!—if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover,
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only I found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory.

Nov. 6, 1821 1830

JOHN KEATS
1795-1821

THE life and the poetry of Keats constitute a most amazing exception to the rule that formal training and long practice

are necessary for the highest achievement. Keats, the son of a servant at an inn in London, was taken out of school at fifteen, was a student of surgery and medicine until twenty-one, and died of consumption at twenty-five. Even when due allowance is made for the fact that his poetical development was encouraged by his school-teacher, Charles Cowden Clarke, by Leigh Hunt, by the artist Benjamin Haydon, and by Wordsworth, Keats must be regarded as almost entirely a "self-made" poet. He enthusiastically appreciated great poetry, and, to a degree unusual even among poets, reverenced the poet's calling. One of the best traits of his amiable character was his modesty. He was ever dissatisfied with his own works, always strove to surpass himself, and stood ready to profit even by the savagely hostile criticism which greeted his first efforts.

The distinctive qualities of Keats's poems were their sensuous appeal, their exquisite rhythm and melody, and the richness of their colors and forms. The loveliness of his style is well set forth in Leigh Hunt's essay (given below, p. 404); and his favorite images are evoked to deck his bier in Shelley's *Adonais* (p. 374).

Some of Keats's critics have been so preoccupied with the beauties of his style that they have ignored his thoughts,—a tendency which Keats himself would have deplored, for he adhered strongly to the faith that poetry is not only an epicurean enjoyment but also a revelation of truth. His view of life had points of contact with those of the other Romantics, but had distinctly individual peculiarities. Like Byron, he was made melancholy by the vanity and dreariness of ordinary life, and by the transitoriness of much that is lovely and joyous. But he conceived a strong antipathy to the Byronic, because Byron would not transcend a merely gloomy or mocking state of mind. To Keats it was possible, though difficult, to find happiness. It could be found in art and in aesthetic appreciation of the universe, in the pursuit of knowledge, and, at its best, in a sincere love of humanity. This vision of the completely human life he expressed in what may be called his last testament, *The Fall of Hyperion*.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been

Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

1817

From ENDYMION

The Proem (Book 1)

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:

And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They always must be with us, or we die.

. . . . . .

[WHEREIN LIES HAPPINESS?]

Wherein lies happiness? In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence; till we shine,
Full alchemized, and free of space. Behold
The clear religion of heaven! Fold
A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,
And soothe thy lips: hist, when the airy stress
Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds
Æolian magic from their lucid wombs:
Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs;
Old ditties sigh above their father's grave;
Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave
Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot;
Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,
Where long ago a giant battle was;
And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass
In every place where infant Orpheus slept.

Feel we these things?—that moment have we stepped
Into a sort of oneness, and our state
Is like a floating spirit's. But there are
Richer entanglements, enthralments far
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
To the chief intensity: the crown of these
Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
Upon the forehead of humanity.
All its more ponderous and bulky worth
Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth
A steady splendor; but at the tip-top,
There hangs by unseen film, an orbèd drop
Of light, and that is love: its influence,
Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,
At which we start and fret; till in the end,
Melting into its radiance, we blend,
Mingle, and so become a part of it,—
Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
So wingedly: when he combine therewith,
Life's self is nourished by its proper pith,
And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.
Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,
That men, who might have towered in the van
Of all the congregated world, to fan
And winnow from the coming step of time
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
Have been content to let occasion die,
Whilst they did sleep in love's elysium.
And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
Than speak against this ardent listlessness:
For I have ever thought that it might bless
The world with benefits unknowingly;
As does the nightingale, up-perchèd high,
And cloistered among cool and bunchèd leaves—
She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.

Just so may love, although 'tis understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witnesseth:
What I know not: but who, of men, can tell
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
If human souls did never kiss and greet?

"Now, if this earthly love has power to make
Men's being mortal, immortal; to shake
Ambition from their memories, and brim
Their measure of content; what merest whim,
Seems all this poor endeavor after fame,
To one, who keeps within his steadfast aim
A love immortal, an immortal too.
Look not so wildered; for these things are true,
And never can be born of atomies
That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,
Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I'm sure,
My restless spirit never could endure
To brood so long upon one luxury,
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.

[THE SOVEREIGNTY OF LOVE]

O sovereign power of love! O grief! O balm!
All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,
And shadowy, through the mist of passed years:
For others, good or bad, hatred and tears
Have become indolent; but touching thine,
One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,

One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.
The woes of Troy, towers smothing o'er their blaze,
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks—all dimly fades
Into some backward corner of the brain;
Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain
The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.
Hence, pageant history! hence, gilded cheat!
Swart planet in the universe of deeds!
Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds
Along the pebbled shore of memory!
Many old rotten-timbered boats there be
Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified
To goodly vessels; many a sail of pride,
And golden keeled, is left unlaunched and dry.
But wherefore this? What care, though owl did fly
About the great Athenian admiral's mast?
What care, though striding Alexander past
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers?
Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers
The glutted Cyclops, what care?—Juliet leaning
Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—weaning
Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
Doth more avail than these: the silver flow
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
Are things to brood on with more ardency
Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully
Must such conviction come upon his head,
Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,
Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,
The path of love and poesy. But rest,
In chaffing restlessness, is yet more drear
Than to be crushed, in striving to uprear
Love's standard on the battlements of song.

So once more days and nights aid me along,
Like legioned soldiers.

1818

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows, haunting fairily
The brain, new stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train

Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired: not cooled by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwinked with fairy fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's feverous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords

Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the agèd creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his grey hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

He followed through a lowly archèd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she muttered "Well-well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;

Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never missed."—Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be storèd there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while. Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;
The Dame returned, and whispered in his ear
To follow her; with agèd eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the agèd gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;

And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together pressed,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,

And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness:
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stepped,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo!—how
fast she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retirèd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:

Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoiled in woofèd fantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence called, "La belle dame sans mercy:"
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;

And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunèd wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for ay thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest

Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from fairy land
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.

That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after a thousand aves told,
For ay unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

1820

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,—
That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainèd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And laden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable mouth endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

1820

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

1820

ODE TO THE POETS

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wondrous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous,
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, trancèd thing,
But divine melodious truth;

Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumbered, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

1820

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Dressed as though bold Robin Hood

Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old-sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

1820

TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

1820

"WHEN I HAVE FEARS"

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in charactery,
Hold like rich garners the full ripened grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;

And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the fairy power
Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

c. January 31, 1818 1848

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering;
The sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a Lady in the meads
Full beautiful, a fairy's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A fairy's song.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
"I love thee true."

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed and sighèd deep,
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
So kissed to sleep.

And there we slumbered on the moss,
And there I dreamed, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cried—"La belle Dame sans mercy
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloom
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

April–May, 1819 1820

THE FALL OF HYPERION, A VISION

Canto I

Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave
A paradise for a sect; the savage, too,
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
Guesses at heaven; pity these have not
Traced upon vellum or wild Indian leaf
The shadows of melodious utterance,
But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die;
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,—
With the fine spell of words alone can save
Imagination from the sable chain
And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,
"Thou art no Poet—may'st not tell thy dreams?"
Since every man whose soul is not a clod
Hath visions and would speak, if he had loved,
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.
Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave.

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,
Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech,
With plantane and spice-blossoms, made a screen,
In neighborhood of fountains (by the noise
Soft-showering in my ears), and (by the touch
Of scent) not far from roses. Turning round
I saw an arbor with a drooping roof
Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,
Like floral censers, swinging light in air;
Before its wreathèd doorway, on a mound
Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,
Which, nearer seen, seemed refuse of a meal
By angel tasted or our Mother Eve;

For empty shells were scattered on the grass,
And grapestalks but half-bare, and remnants more
Sweet-smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know.
Still was more plenty than the fabled horn
Thrice emptied could pour forth at banqueting,
For Proserpine returned to her own fields,
Where the white heifers low. And appetite,
More yearning than on earth I ever felt,
Growing within, I ate deliciously,—
And, after not long, thirsted; for thereby
Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice
Sipped by the wandered bee, the which I took,
And pledging all the mortals of the world,
And all the dead whose names are in our lips,
Drank. That full draught is parent of my theme.
No Asian poppy nor elixir fine
Of the soon-fading, jealous, Caliphat,
No poison gendered in close monkish cell,
To thin the scarlet conclave of old men,
Could so have rapt unwilling life away.
Among the fragrant husks and berries crushed
Upon the grass, I struggled hard against
The domineering potion, but in vain.
The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sank,
Like a Silenus on an antique vase.
How long I slumbered 'tis a chance to guess.
When sense of life returned, I started up
As if with wings, but the fair trees were gone,

The mossy mound and arbor were no more:
I looked around upon the carvèd sides
Of an old sanctuary, with roof august,
Builded so high, it seemed that filmèd clouds
Might spread beneath as o'er the stars of heaven.
So old the place was, I remembered none
The like upon the earth: what I had seen
Of gray cathedrals, buttressed walls, rent towers,

The superannuations of sunk realms,
Or Nature's rocks toiled hard in waves and winds,
Seemed but the faulture of decrepit things
To that eternal domèd monument.
Upon the marble at my feet there lay
Store of strange vessels and large draperies,
Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,
Or in that place the moth could not corrupt,
So white the linen, so, in some, distinct
Ran imageries from a sombre loom.
All in a mingled heap confused there lay
Robes, golden tongs, censer and chafing-dish,
Girdles, and chains, and holy jewelries.

Turning from these with awe, once more I raised
My eyes to fathom the space every way:
The embossed roof, the silent massy range
Of columns north and south, ending in mist
Of nothing; then to eastward, where black gates
Were shut against the sunrise evermore;
Then to the west I looked, and saw far off
An image, huge of feature as a cloud,
At level of whose feet an altar slept,
To be approached on either side by steps
And marble balustrade, and patient travail
To count with toil the innumerable degrees.
Towards the altar sober-paced I went,
Repressing haste as too unholy there;
And, coming nearer, saw beside the shrine
One ministering; and there arose a flame
When in mid-day the sickening east wind
Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain
Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,
And fills the air with so much pleasant health
That even the dying man forgets his shroud;—
Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,
Sending forth Maian incense, spread around

Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,
And clouded all the altar with soft smoke;
From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard
Language pronounced: "If thou canst not ascend
These steps, die on that marble where thou art.
Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
Will parch for lack of nutriment; thy bones
Will wither in few years, and vanish so
That not the quickest eye could find a grain
Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.
The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,
And no hand in the universe can turn
Thy hour-glass, if these gummèd leaves be burnt
Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps."
I heard, I looked: two senses both at once,
So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed.
Prodigious seemed the toil; the leaves were yet
Burning, when suddenly a palsied chill
Struck from the pavèd level up my limbs,
And was ascending quick to put cold grasp
Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat.
I shrieked, and the sharp anguish of my shriek
Stung my own ears; I strove hard to escape
The numbness, strove to gain the lowest step.
Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold
Grew stifling, suffocating at the heart;
And when I clasped my hands I felt them not.
One minute before death my iced foot touched
The lowest stair; and, as if touched, life seemed
To pour in at the toes; I mounted up
As once fair angels on a ladder flew
From the green turf to heaven. "Holy Power,"
Cried I, approaching near the hornèd shrine,
"What am I that should so be saved from death?
What am I that another death come not
To choke my utterance, sacrilegious, here?"

Then said the veilèd shadow; "Thou hast felt
What 'tis to die and live again before
Thy fated hour; that thou hadst power to do so
Is thine own safety; thou hast dated on
Thy doom." "High Prophetess," said I, "purge off,
Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film."
"None can usurp this height," returned that shade,
"But those to whom the miseries of the world
Are misery, and will not let them rest.
All else who find a haven in the world,
Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,
If by a chance into this fane they come,
Rot on the pavement where thou rottedst half."
"Are there not thousands in the world," said I,
Encouraged by the sooth voice of the shade,
"Who love their fellows even to the death,
Who feel the giant agony of the world,
And more, like slaves to poor humanity,
Labor for mortal good? I sure should see
Other men here, but I am here alone."
"Those whom thou spak'st of are no vision'ries,"
Rejoined that voice; "they are no dreamers weak;
They seek no wonder but the human face,
No music but a happy-noted voice:
They come not here; they have no thought to come;
And thou art here, for thou art less than they.
What benefit canst thou, or all thy tribe,
To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,
A fever of thyself: think of the earth;
What bliss, even in hope, is there for thee?
What haven? every creature hath its home,
Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,
Whether his labors be sublime or low—
The pain alone, the joy alone, distinct:
Only the dreamer venoms all his days,
Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.
Therefore, that happiness be somewhat shared,

Such things as thou art are admitted oft
Into like gardens thou didst pass erewhile,
And suffered in these temples: for that cause
Thou standest safe beneath this statue's knees."
"That I am favored for unworthiness,
By such propitious parley medicined
In sickness not ignoble, I rejoice,
Aye, and could weep for love of such award."
So answered I, continuing, "If it please,
Majestic shadow, tell me: sure not all
Those melodies sung into the World's ear
Are useless; sure a poet is a sage;
A humanist, physician to all men.
That I am none I feel, as vultures feel
They are no birds when eagles are abroad.
What am I then: Thou spakest of my tribe:
What tribe?" The tall shade veiled in drooping white
Then spake, so much more earnest, that the breath
Moved the thin linen folds that drooping hung
About a golden censer from the hand
Pendent—"Art thou not of the dreamer tribe?
The poet and the dreamer are distinct,
Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.
The one pours out a balm upon the World,
The other vexes it." Then shouted I
Spite of myself, and with a Pythia's spleen,
"Apollo! faded! O far flown Apollo!
Where is thy misty pestilence to creep
Into the dwellings, through the door crannies
Of all mock lyrists, large self worshippers
And careless Hectorers in proud bad verse.
Though I breathe death with them it will be life
To see them sprawl before me into graves.
Majestic shadow, tell me where I am,
Whose altar this, for whom this incense curls;
What image this whose face I cannot see

For the broad marble knees; and who thou art,
Of accent feminine so courteous?"

Then the tall shade, in drooping linens veiled,
Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her breath
Stirred the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung
About a golden censer from her hand
Pendent; and by her voice I knew she shed
Long-treasured tears. "This temple, sad and lone,
Is all spared from the thunder of a war
Foughten long since by giant hierarchy
Against rebellion; this old image here,
Whose carvèd features wrinkled as he fell,
Is Saturn's; I, Moneta, left supreme,
Sole priestess of this desolation."
I had no words to answer, for my tongue,
Useless, could find about its roofèd home
No syllable of a fit majesty
To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn:
There was a silence, while the altar's blaze
Was fainting for sweet food. I looked thereon,
And on the pavèd floor, where nigh were piled
Fagots of cinnamon, and many heaps
Of other crispèd spicewood: then again
I looked upon the altar, and its horns
Whitened with ashes, and its lang'rous flame,
And then upon the offerings again;
And so, by turns, till sad Moneta cried:
"The sacrifice is done, but not the less
Will I be kind to thee for thy good will.
My power, which to me is still a curse,
Shall be to thee a wonder; for the scenes
Still swooning vivid through my globèd brain,
With an electral changing misery,
Thou shalt with these dull mortal eyes behold
Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not."
As near as an immortal's spherèd words

Could to a mother's soften were these last:
And yet I had a terror of her robes,
And chiefly of the veils that from her brow
Hung pale, and curtained her in mysteries,
That made my heart too small to hold its blood.
This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand
Parted the veils. Then saw I a wan face,
Not pined by human sorrows, but bright-blanched
By an immortal sickness which kills not;
It works a constant change, which happy death
Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
To no death was that visage; it had passed
The lily and the snow; and beyond these
I must not think now, though I saw that face.
But for her eyes I should have fled away;
They held me back with a benignant light,
Soft mitigated by divinest lids
Half-closed, and visionless entire they seemed
Of all external things; they saw me not,
But, in blank splendor, beamed, like the mild moon,
Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
What eyes are upward cast. As I had found
A grain of gold upon a mountain's side,
And, twinged with avarice, strained out my eyes
To search its sullen entrails rich with ore,
So, at the view of sad Moneta's brow,
I asked to see what things the hollow brain
Behind enwombed: what high tragedy
In the dark secret chambers of her skull
Was acting, that could give so dread a stress
To her cold lips, and fill with such a light
Her planetary eyes, and touch her voice
With such a sorrow? "Shade of Memory!"
Cried I, with act adorant at her feet,
"By all the gloom hung round thy fallen house,
By this last temple, by the golden age,
By great Apollo, thy dear foster-child,

And by thyself, forlorn divinity,
The pale Omega of a withered race,
Let me behold, according as thou saidst,
What in thy brain so ferments to and fro!"
No sooner had this conjuration passed
My devout lips, than side by side we stood
(Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine)
Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star.
Onward I looked beneath the gloomy boughs,
And saw what first I thought an image huge,
Like to the image pedestalled so high
In Saturn's temple; then Moneta's voice
Came brief upon mine ear. "So Saturn sat
When he had lost his realms:" whereon there grew
A power within me of enormous ken
To see as a god sees, and take the depth
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme
At those few words hung vast before my mind
With half-unravelled web. I sat myself
Upon an eagle's watch, that I might see,
And seeing ne'er forget. No stir of life
Was in this shrouded vale,—not so much air
As in the zoning of a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass;
But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of the fallen divinity
Spreading more shade; the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went
No further than to where old Saturn's feet
Had rested, and there slept how long a sleep!
Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground

His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred, and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bowed head seemed listening to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seemed no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one who, with a kindred hand,
Touched his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
Then came the grievèd voice of Mnemosyne,
And grieved I hearkened. "That divinity
Whom thou saw'st step from yon forlornest wood,
And with slow pace approach our fallen king,
Is Thea, softest-natured of our brood."
I marked the Goddess, in fair statuary
Surpassing wan Moneta by the head,
And in her sorrow nearer woman's tears.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder laboring up.
One hand she pressed upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his hollow ear
Leaning, with parted lips some words she spake
In solemn tenor and deep organ-tune;
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in this like accenting; how frail
To that large utterance of the early gods!

"Saturn, look up! and for what, poor lost king!
I have no comfort for thee; no, not one;
I cannot say, wherefore thus sleepest thou?

For Heaven is parted from thee, and the Earth
Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a god;
And Ocean, too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre passed; and all the air
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, captious at the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning, in unpractised hands,
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.

"With such remorseless speed still come new woes,
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn! sleep on: me thoughtless, why should I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn! sleep on, while at thy feet I weep."

As when upon a trancèd summer-night
Forests, branch-charmèd by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a noise,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Swelling upon the silence, dying off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave,
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She pressed her fair large forehead to the earth,
Just where her fallen hair might spread in curls,
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
Long, long these two were postured motionless,
Like sculpture builded-up upon the grave
Of their own power. A long awful time
I looked upon them: still they were the same;
The frozen God still bending to the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet;
Moneta silent. Without stay or prop
But my own weak mortality, I bore
The load of this eternal quietude,

The unchanging gloom and the three fixed shapes
Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon;
For by my burning brain I measured sure
Her silver seasons shedded on the night,
And every day by day methought I grew
More gaunt and ghostly. Oftentimes I prayed
Intense, that death would take me from the vale
And all its burthens; gasping with despair
Of change, hour after hour I cursed myself,
Until old Saturn raised his faded eyes,
And looked around and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess at his feet.

As the moist scent of flowers, and grass, and leaves,
Fills forest dells with a pervading air,
Known to the woodland nostril, so the words
Of Saturn filled the mossy glooms around,
Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,
And to the windings of the foxes' hole,
With sad, low tones, while thus he spake, and sent
Strange musings to the solitary Pan.
"Moan, brethren, moan, for we are swallowed up
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
And peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in. Moan and wail;
Moan, brethren, moan; for lo, the rebel spheres
Spin round; the stars their ancient courses keep;
Clouds still with shadowy moisture haunt the earth,
Still suck their fill of light from sun and moon;
Still buds the tree, and still the seashores murmur;
There is no death in all the universe,
No smell of death.—There shall be death. Moan,
moan;

Moan, Cybele, moan; for thy pernicious babes
Have changed a god into an aching palsy.
Moan, brethren, moan, for I have no strength left;
Weak as the reed, weak, feeble as my voice
Oh! oh! the pain, the pain of feebleness;
Moan, moan, for still I thaw; or give me help;
Throw down those imps, and give me victory.
Let me hear other groans, and trumpets blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival,
From the gold peaks of heaven's high-pilèd clouds;
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children." So he feebly ceased,
With such a poor and sickly-sounding pause,
Methought I heard some old man of the earth
Bewailing earthly loss; nor could my eyes
And ears act with that pleasant unison of sense
Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form,
And dolorous accent from a tragic harp
With large-limbed visions. More I scrutinized.
Still fixed he sat beneath the sable trees,
Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms,
With leaves all hushed; his awful presence there
(Now all was silent) gave a deadly lie
To what I erewhile heard: only his lips
Trembled amid the white curls of his beard;
They told the truth, though round the snowy locks
Hung nobly, as upon the face of heaven
A mid-day fleece of clouds. Thea arose,
And stretched her white arm through the hollow dark,
Pointing some whither: whereat he too rose,
Like a vast giant, seen by men at sea
To grow pale from the waves at dull midnight.
They melted from my sight into the woods;

Ere I could turn, Moneta cried, "These twain
Are speeding to the families of grief,
Where, rooft in by black rocks, they waste in pain
And darkness, for no hope." And she spake on,
As ye may read who can unwearied pass
Onward from th' antechamber of this dream,
Where, even at the open doors, awhile
I must delay, and glean my memory
Of her high praise—perhaps no further dare.

Canto II

"Mortal, that thou may'st understand aright,
I humanize my sayings to thine ear,
Making comparisons of earthly things;
Or thou might'st better listen to the wind,
Whose language is to thee a barren noise,
Though it blows legend-laden thro' the trees.
In melancholy realms big tears are shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe.
The Titans fierce, self-hid or prison-bound,
Groan for the old allegiance once more,
Listening in their doom for Saturn's voice.
But one of our whole eagle-brood still keeps
His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty:
Blazing Hyperion on his orbèd fire
Still sits, still snuffs the incense teeming up
From Man to the Sun's God—yet unsecure.
For as upon the earth dire prodigies
Fright and perplex, so also shudders he;
Not at dog's howl or gloom-bird's Even screech,
Or the familiar vistings of one
Upon the first toll of his passing bell,
But horrors, portioned to a giant nerve,
Make great Hyperion ache. His palace bright,
Bastioned with pyramids of glowing gold,

And touched with shade of bronzèd obelisks,
Glares a blood-red thro' all the thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush angerly; when he would taste the wreaths
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate takes
Savor of poisonous brass and metals sick;
Wherefore when harbored in the sleepy West,
After the full completion of fair day,
For rest divine upon exalted couch,
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paces through the pleasant hours of ease,
With strides colossal, on from hall to hall,
While far within each aisle and deep recess
His wingèd minions in close clusters stand
Amazed, and full of fear; like anxious men,
Who on a wide plain gather in sad troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers
Even now while Saturn, roused from icy trance,
Goes step for step with Thea from yon woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Is sloping to the threshold of the West.
Thither we tend." Now in clear light I stood,
Relieved from the dusk vale. Mnemosyne
Was sitting on a square-edged polished stone,
That in its lucid depth reflected pure
Her priestess' garments. My quick eyes ran on
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bow'rs of fragrant and enwreathèd light,
And diamond-pavèd lustrous long arcades.
Anon rushed by the bright Hyperion;
His flaming robes streamed out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar as if of earthly fire,
That scared away the meek ethereal hours,
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared.

c. November-December, 1819 1856

THE LAST SONNET

Written on a Blank Page in Shakspere's Poems, Facing "A Lover's Complaint"

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art—
  Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
  Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priest-like task
  Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
  Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
  Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
  Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

c. December 28, 1820 1848

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
1792-1822

So much political and philosophical partisanship embitters the discussions about Shelley that the real truth concerning his character, and concerning the meaning and value of his poems, is hard to discern. His worshippers assert that his lyrical powers are nothing short of marvelous, and even his enemies concede the point; but every other important matter is hotly disputed. The scorners of Shelley make much of his early period (before the age of twenty-three). In those years, he was expelled from Oxford for engaging in atheistical propaganda, he entered into an unwise marriage, he de-

serted his wife and children, he eloped with Mary Godwin, and he professed those principles of philosophical anarchy (including free love and communism) of which her father, William Godwin, was an advocate. The young Shelley's failure to adjust himself to the world was clear; and his opponents then and now have found plenty of evidence in his youthful doings and sayings to indict him as rash, impious, and wicked, and to suggest that the poetry of such a man can hardly be of true light and leading.

It seems, however, unnecessary to apologize for Shelley's conduct during that period (although there are facts which mitigate his offenses); for the reason,—which his enemies ignore,—that those poems of Shelley which are his greatest belong to the later period of his life (1815-22), when there was some change in the manner of his life, and a decidedly important change in his views.

During his last eight years Shelley, who had been a materialist and rationalist, scornful of the spiritual and the imaginative, became, under the influence of Plato, Plotinus, and Spinoza, a transcendental idealist, with a mystical religion and a highly imaginative theory of poetry. From his earlier period he retained his political opposition to autocratic tyranny and privilege, his rebelliousness against senseless conventions, and his impatience with the slowness of human progress. He retained his interest in the bolder speculations of contemporary scientists. He retained, too, his love of nature; but he now felt that the poet's highest opportunity lay in not merely describing phenomena objectively but in evoking that ideal beauty which the visual appearance tended to veil. The Shelley of the great poems believed in a Soul of the Universe, a Spirit of Love, revealed through poetry and art. He believed that the will of mankind could be more successfully exerted against our besetting evils than it had been in the past, and that soon it would be thus exerted; but this liberation of mankind would be achieved, not by cool reason, but rather by ardent love and faith. Those who struggled onwards in that spirit were the truly great and good:

> To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own Wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
> This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be

Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.
(Close of *Prometheus Unbound*)

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

I

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen amongst us,—visiting
This various world with an inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—
Like memory of music fled,—
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

2

Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom,—why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

3

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given—
Therefore the names of Dæmon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavor,
Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night wind sent,
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

4

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent,
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart
Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—
Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came,
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

5

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,

And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead,
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed,
I was not heard—I saw them not—
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at the sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,—
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

6

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers
Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious night—
They know that never joy illumined my brow
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery,
That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

7

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past—there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth

Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm—to one who worships thee
And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

1816 1817

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, (stamped on these lifeless things,)
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

1817 1818

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright;
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might;
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone,—
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament—for I am one

Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

1818 1824

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

I

The Fountains mingle with the River
And the Rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle.
Why not I with thine?—

II

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother,
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?

1819 1819

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O, wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O, thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving every where;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
[illegible]lted with all thy congregated might

[illegible]pors, from whose solid atmosphere
[illegible]rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need,
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

v

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

1819 1820

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet

Hath led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber window, sweet!

The wandering airs, they faint
On the dark, the silent stream;
The champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
Oh, belovèd as thou art!

Oh, lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;—
Oh! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

1819 1822

From PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

[THE DELIVERANCE OF MAN]

Those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,

Frown, moldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines:
The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colors idly spread,
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless; no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

1818–19 1820

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,—
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbid maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,

May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when, with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,

Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

1820 1820

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,

As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not—

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower—

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view—

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine:

Chorus Hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be—
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound—
Better than all treasures
That in books are found—
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

1820 1820

ADONAIS

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζώοισιν ἑῷος.
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις ἕσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

PLATO

I

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!

And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: with me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity.

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veilèd eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sat, while one, with soft enamored breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

III

O, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
Like this, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—He died,

Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipped before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,

He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace,
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The external Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

O, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,—
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries;
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain."
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII

Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath

Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV

All he had loved, and molded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,

Or amorous birds perched on the young green
spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen
hear.

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw
down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odor, to sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirits' sister, the lorn nightingale,
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone
But grief returns with the revolving year;

The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in fields and brere;
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst
As it has ever done, with change and motion
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

XX

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Naught we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed beneath the sheath
By sightless lightning?—th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs."
And all the dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy science, cried: "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear

So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her aëry tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV

In the death chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

XXVI

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;

And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

XXVII

"Oh gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, or where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

XXVIII

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion; how they fled,
When like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow;
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XXIX

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wild Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXXI

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men, companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,

And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly; on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose crude shaft dark ivy tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own;
As, in the accents of an unknown land,

He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who art thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—Oh! that it should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honored the departed one,
Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt; yet could escape the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,

Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound, tremble thou shalt—as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life—
'Tis we who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn
Turn all thy dew to splendor, nor from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou
Air
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst
thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird:
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own:

Which wields the world with never wearied love.
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not

Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry,
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? oh come forth
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it makes thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
O, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis naught
That ages, empires, and religions there

Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead,
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

L

And gray walls molder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flames transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned

Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is past from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near;
'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar:
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

1821 1821

From HELLAS

Life May Change, But It May Fly Not

Life may change, but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish, but can die not;
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

Yet were life a charnel where
Hope lay coffined with Despair;
Yet were truth a sacred lie,
Love were lust—

If Liberty
Lent not life its soul of light,
Hope its iris of delight,
Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
Love its power to give and bear.

Worlds on Worlds Are Rolling Ever

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
But they are still immortal
Who, through birth's orient portal
And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
Clothe their unceasing flight
In the brief dust and light
Gathered around their chariots as they go;
New shapes they still may weave,
New gods, new laws receive,
Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror, came;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapor dim
Which the orient planet animates with light;
Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,
Like bloodhounds mild and tame,

Nor preyed, until their lord had taken flight;
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set:
While blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one whose dreams are Paradise,
Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And Day peers forth with her blank eyes;
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The Powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem:
Apollo, Pan, and Love,
And even Olympian Jove
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them;
Our hills and seas and streams,
Dispeopled of their dreams,
Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
Wailed for the golden years.

The World's Great Age Begins Anew

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning star.

Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free:
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendor of its prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose
Shall burst, more bright and good
Than all who fell, than One who rose,
Than many unsubdued:
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.

The world is weary of the past,
Oh, might it die or rest at last!

1822

TO NIGHT

I

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long sought!

III

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noon-tide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
No, not thee!

V

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

TO ———

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

1824

A LAMENT

I

Oh, world! oh, life! oh, time!
On whose last steps I climb

Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—O, never more!

II

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—O, never more!

1824

TO ——

I

One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

II

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,—
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

1824

LINES

I

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendor
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute,—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest,—
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O, Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home and your bier?

IV

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high:
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

1824

LEIGH HUNT
1784-1859

If it had not been for Leigh Hunt's discernment and enthusiasm, the greatness of several of the Romantics,—e. g., Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley,—would have received slower recognition. Himself a talented writer of verse and prose, Hunt's chief service lay in pointing out the merits of writers of genius. Remarkably few of his judgments concerning the writers of his own age or of earlier periods have been rejected by the verdict of later times. His skill in exhibiting the qualities of an author by means of apt quotation was extraordinary. His essay, *What Is Poetry?*, though not as profound as Coleridge's or Shelley's discussions on the subject, is one of the clearest statements of the aesthetic beliefs of the Romantic School ever written.

Hunt was a friend of Lamb, Hazlitt, Moore, Byron, and Shelley. He edited a literary journal, *The Indicator,* in which some important writings of the school, such as Hazlitt's *My First Acquaintance with Poets,* made their first appearance. Charles Lamb aptly wrote of him:

> Wit, poet, prose-man, party-man, translator,—
> Hunt, your best title yet is Indicator.

ABOU BEN ADHEM

Abou Ben Adhem, may his tribe increase!
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

1838

RONDEAU

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kissed me.

1838

PROEM TO SELECTION FROM KEATS'S POETRY

Keats was born a poet of the most poetical kind. All his feelings came to him through a poetical medium, or were speedily colored by it. He enjoyed a jest as heartily as any one, and sympathized with the lowliest commonplace; but the next minute his thoughts were in a garden of enchantment, with nymphs, and fauns, and shapes of exalted humanity:

Elysian beauty, melancholy grace.

It might be said of him that he never beheld an oak tree without seeing the Dryad. His fame may now forgive the critics who disliked his politics, and did not understand his poetry. Repeated editions of him in England, France, and America attest its triumphant survival of all obloquy; and there can be no doubt that he has taken a permanent station among the British poets, of a very high, if not thoroughly mature, description.

Keats's early poetry, indeed, partook plentifully of the exuberance of youth; and even in most of his later, his sensibility, sharpened by mortal illness, tended to a morbid excess. His region is "a wilderness of sweets,"—flowers of all hue, and "weeds of glorious feature,"—where, as he says, the luxuriant soil brings

The pipy hemlock to strange undergrowth.

But there also is the "rain-scented eglantine," and bushes of May-flowers, with bees, and myrtle, and bay,—and endless paths into forests haunted with the loveliest as well as gentlest beings; and the gods live in the distance, amid notes of majestic thunder.

I do not say that no "surfeit" is ever there; but I do, that there is no end of the "nectared sweets." In what other English poet (however superior to him in other respects) are you so *certain* of never opening a page without lighting upon the loveliest imagery and the most eloquent expressions? Name one. Compare any succession of their pages at random, and see if the young poet is not sure to present his stock of beauty; crude it may be, in many instances; too indiscriminate in general; never, perhaps, thoroughly perfect in cultivation; but there it is, exquisite of its kind, and filling envy with despair. He died at five-and-twenty; he had not revised his earlier works, nor given his genius its last pruning. His *Endymion,* in resolving to be free from all critical trammels, had no versification; and his last noble fragment, *Hyperion,* is not faultless,—but it is nearly so. *The Eve of St. Agnes* betrays morbidity only in one instance (noticed in the comment). Even in his earliest productions, which are to be considered as those of youth just emerging from boyhood, are to be found passages of as masculine a beauty as ever were written. Witness the *Sonnet on Reading Chapman's Homer,*—epical in the splendor and dignity of its images, and terminating with the noblest Greek simplicity. Among his finished productions, however, of any length, *The Eve of St. Agnes* still appears to me the most delightful and complete specimen of his genius. It stands midway between his most sensitive ones (which, though of rare beauty, occasionally sink into feebleness) and the less generally characteristic majesty of the fragment of *Hyperion.* Doubtless his greatest poetry is to be found in *Hyperion;* and had he lived, there is as little doubt he would have written chiefly in that strain; rising superior to those languishments of

love which made the critics so angry, and which they might so easily have pardoned at his time of life. But *The Eve of St. Agnes* had already bid most of them adieu,—exquisitely loving as it is. It is young, but full-grown poetry of the rarest description; graceful as the beardless Apollo; glowing and gorgeous with the colors of romance. I have therefore reprinted the whole of it in the present volume, together with the comment alluded to in the Preface; especially as, in addition to felicity of treatment, its subject is in every respect a happy one, and helps to "paint" this our bower of "poetry with delight." Melancholy, it is true, will "break in" when the reader thinks of the early death of such a writer; but it is one of the benevolent provisions of nature that all good things tend to pleasure in the recollection, when the bitterness of their loss is past, their own sweetness embalms them.

A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

While writing this paragraph, a hand-organ out-of-doors has been playing one of the mournfullest and loveliest of the airs of Bellini—another genius who died young. The sound of music always gives a feeling either of triumph or tenderness to the state of mind in which it is heard: in this instance it seemed like one departed spirit come to bear testimony to another, and to say how true indeed may be the union of sorrowful and sweet recollections.

Keats knew the youthful faults of his poetry as well as any man, as the reader may see by the preface to *Endymion,* and its touching though manly acknowledgment of them to critical candor. I have this moment read it again, after a lapse of years, and have been astonished to think how anybody could answer such an appeal to the mercy of

strength, with the cruelty of weakness. All the good for which Mr. Gifford pretended to be zealous, he might have effected with pain to no one, and glory to himself; and therefore all the evil he mixed with it was of his own making. But the secret at the bottom of such unprovoked censure is exasperated inferiority. Young poets, upon the whole,—at least very young poets,—had better not publish at all. They are pretty sure to have faults; and jealousy and envy are as sure to find them out, and wreak upon them their own disappointments. The critic is often an unsuccessful author, almost always an inferior one to a man of genius, and possesses his sensibility neither to beauty nor to pain. If he does,—if by any chance he is a man of genius himself (and such things have been), sure and certain will be his regret, some day, for having given pains which he might have turned into noble pleasures; and nothing will console him but that very charity towards himself, the grace of which can only be secured to us by our having denied it to no one.

Let the student of poetry observe that in all the luxury of *The Eve of St. Agnes* there is nothing of the conventional craft of artificial writers; no heaping up of words or similes for their own sakes or the rhyme's sake; no gaudy commonplaces; no borrowed airs of earnestness; no tricks of inversion; no substitution of reading or of ingenious thoughts for feeling or spontaneity; no irrelevancy or unfitness of any sort. All flows out of sincerity and passion. The writer is as much in love with the heroine as his hero is; his description of the painted widow, however gorgeous, has not an untrue or superfluous word; and the only speck of a fault in the whole poem arises from an excess of emotion.

1844

THOMAS DE QUINCEY
1785-1859

De Quincey was the son of a merchant in Manchester. He studied at Oxford, and thereafter lived mostly in the Lake country and in Edinburgh. He was acquainted with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Southey, and Carlyle; but his life was bookish and solitary. Often he disappeared from the ken of his family and friends. There was much in actual life, in history, and in literature, that he found admirable, intriguing, or delightful; but, like other Romantics, he felt at times stifled by the frustrations and imperfections of ordinary life. He sought escape from dreariness, and satisfaction of his intuitions, through that visionary world which was disclosed to him by opium; and his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* is his most famous work.

He contributed no distinctively new and important idea to the romantic movement, but he applied its principles to so many different subjects that he greatly enriched its literature. A scholar, a sympathetic observer of life, and a dreamer, he appreciated equally the intellectual, the emotional, and the mystical. His intense love of music contributed to the beauty of his style. Lamb is a more graceful writer than he, Hazlitt a more incisive, Southey a more correct, Landor a more impeccably austere; but none of his peers surpasses De Quincey in mastery over harmony, cadence, and sonorousness.

From THE PLEASURES OF OPIUM

Markets and theatres are not the appropriate haunts of the opium-eater, when in the divinest state incident to his enjoyment. In that state, crowds become an oppression to him; music even, too sensual and gross. He naturally seeks solitude and silence, as indispensable conditions of those trances and profoundest reveries which are the crown or consummation of what opium can do for human nature. I, whose disease it was to meditate

too much, and to observe too little, and who upon my first entrance at college was nearly falling into a deep melancholy from brooding too much on the sufferings which I had witnessed in London, was sufficiently aware of the tendencies of my own thoughts to do all I could to counteract them.—I was, indeed, like a person who, according to the old legend, had entered the cave of Trophonius: and the remedies I sought were to force myself into society, and to keep my understanding in continual activity upon matters of science. But for these remedies, I should certainly have become hypochondriacally melancholy. In after years, however, when my cheerfulness was more fully re-established, I yielded to my natural inclination for a solitary life. And, at that time, I often fell into these reveries upon taking opium; and more than once it has happened to me, on a summer night, when I have been at an open window, in a room from which I could overlook the sea at a mile below me, and could command a view of the great town of L[iverpool], at about the same distance, that I have sat, from sunset to sun-rise, motionless, and without wishing to move.

I shall be charged with mysticism, Behmenism, quietism, etc., but *that* shall not alarm me. Sir H. Vane, the younger, was one of our wisest men: and let my readers see if he, in his philosophical works, be half as unmystical as I am.—I say, then, that it has often struck me that the scene itself was somewhat typical of what took place in such a reverie. The town of L[iverpool] represented the earth, with its sorrows and its graves left behind, yet not out of sight, nor wholly forgotten. The ocean, in everlasting but gentle agitation, and brooded over by a dove-like calm, might not unfitly typify the mind and the mood which then swayed it. For it seemed to me

as if then first I stood at a distance, and aloof from the uproar of life, as if the tumult, the fever, and the strife, were suspended; a respite granted from the secret burthens of the heart; a sabbath of repose; a resting from human labors. Here were the hopes which blossom in the paths of life, reconciled with the peace which is in the grave; motions of the intellect as unwearied as the heavens, yet for all anxieties a halcyon calm: a tranquillity that seemed no product of inertia, but as if resulting from mighty and equal antagonisms; infinite activities, infinite repose.

Oh! just, subtle, and mighty opium! that to the hearts of poor and rich alike, for the wounds that will never heal, and for "the pangs that tempt the spirit to revel," bringest an assuaging balm; eloquent opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath; and to the guilty man for one night givest back the hopes of his youth, and hands washed pure from blood; and to the proud man a brief oblivion for

> Wrongs unredressed and insults unavenged;

that summonest to the chancery of dreams, for the triumphs of suffering innocence, false witnesses; and confoundest perjury; and dost reverse the sentences of unrighteous judges:—thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness, out of the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities and temples beyond the art of Phidias and Praxiteles—beyond the splendor of Babylon and Hekatompylos: and "from the anarchy of dreaming sleep," callest into sunny light the faces of long-buried beauties, and the blessed household countenances, cleansed from the "dishonors of the grave." Thou only givest these gifts to man; and thou hast the keys of Paradise, oh, just, subtle, and mighty opium! . . .

But now farewell—a long farewell to happiness—winter or summer; farewell to smiles and laughter! farewell to peace of mind! farewell to hope and to tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep! for more than three years and a half I am summoned away from these: I am now arrived at an *Iliad* of woes: for I have now to record

The Pains of Opium

———as when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.
—Shelley's *Revolt of Islam.*

My Oriental dreams . . . always filled me with such amazement at the monstrous scenery, that horror seemed absorbed, for a while, in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later, came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a sense of eternity and infinity that drove me into an oppression as of madness. Into these dreams only, it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles; especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than almost all the rest. I was compelled to live with him; and (as was always the case almost in my dreams) for centuries. I escaped sometimes, and found myself in Chinese houses, with cane tables, etc. All the feet of the tables, sofas, etc., soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into a thousand repetitions: and I

stood loathing and fascinated. And so often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams, that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way: I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping); and instantly I awoke: it was broad noon; and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside; come to show me their colored shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. I protest that so awful was the transition from the damned crocodile, and the other unutterable monsters and abortions of my dreams, to the sight of innocent *human* natures and of infancy, that, in the mighty and sudden revulsion of mind, I wept, and could not forbear it, as I kissed their faces.

1821

LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW

Oftentimes at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the new-born infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness,—typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in Pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmosphere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. *That* might bear different interpretations. But immediately, lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana,

or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps, in his heart, "Behold what is greater than yourselves!" This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare,* to raise aloft.

This is the explanation of Levana. And hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a prefigurative or mimic degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore watches over human education. Now, the word *ed*ŭ*co,* with the penultimate short, was derived (by a process often exemplified in the crystallization of languages) from the word *ed*ū*co,* with the penultimate long. Whatsoever *educes,* or develops, *educates.* By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant,—not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars, but by that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works forever upon children,—resting not day or night, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering forever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief! But you, reader, think that children generally are not liable to grief such as mine. There

are two senses in the word *generally*,—the sense of Euclid, where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and a foolish sense of this word, where it means *usually*. Now, I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are more than you ever heard of who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules of Eton require that a boy on the *foundation* should be there twelve years: he is superannuated at eighteen; consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief; but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than ever have been counted amongst its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake man's heart; therefore it is that she dotes upon grief. "These ladies," said I softly to myself, on seeing the ministers with whom Levana was conversing, "these are the Sorrows; and they are three in number: as the *Graces* are three, who dress man's life with beauty; the *Parcæ* are three, who weave the dark arras of man's life in their mysterious loom always with colors sad in part, sometimes angry with tragic crimson and black; the *Furies* are three, who visit with retributions called from the other side of the grave offences that walk upon this; and once even the *Muses* were but three, who fit the harp, the trumpet, or the lute, to the great burdens of man's impassioned creations. These are the Sorrows; all three of whom I know." The last words I say *now;* but in Oxford I said, "one of whom I know, and the others too surely I *shall* know." For already, in my fervent youth, I saw (dimly relieved upon the dark background of

my dreams) the imperfect lineaments of the awful Sisters.

These Sisters—by what name shall we call them? If I say simply "The Sorrows," there will be a chance of mistaking the term; it might be understood of individual sorrow,—separate cases of sorrow,—whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart, and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations,—that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions, pointing to flesh. Let us call them, therefore, *Our Ladies of Sorrow.*

I knew them thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household; and their paths are wide apart; but of their dominion there is no end. Them I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then? O no! Mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves is no voice nor sound; eternal silence reigns in *their* kingdoms. They spoke not as they talked with Levana; they whispered not; they sang not; though oftentimes methought they *might* have sung: for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. *They* wheeled in mazes; *I* spelled the steps. *They* telegraphed from afar; *I* read the signals. *They* conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness *my*

eye traced the plots. *Theirs* were the symbols; *mine* are the words.

What is it the Sisters are? What is it that they do? Let me describe their form and their presence, if form it were that still fluctuated in its outline, or presence it were that forever advanced to the front or forever receded amongst shades.

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum,* Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation,—Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened forever which, heard at times as they trotted along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven. Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies, or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This Sister, the elder, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth, to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the springtime of the year, and whilst yet her own spring was budding, He recalled her to himself. But her blind

father mourns forever over *her:* still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is *now* within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* also has been sitting all this winter of 1844-5 within the bedchamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of the keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides, a ghostly intruder, into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to the Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her, because she is the first-born of her house, and had the widest empire, let us honor with the title of "Madonna."

The second Sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum,* Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban, droops forever, forever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister, Madonna, is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamors, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when

the sun has gone down to his rest. This Sister is the visitor of the Pariah, of the Jew, of the bondsman to the oar in the Mediterranean galleys; of the English criminal in Norfolk Island, blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England; of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes forever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar overthrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no oblations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother, but for *him* a stepmother, as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against *him* sealed and sequestered; every woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections, which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsman, whom God will judge; every captive in every dungeon; all that are betrayed, and all that are rejected; outcasts by traditionary law, and children of *hereditary* disgrace; all these walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also carries a key; but she needs it little. For her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem, and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest ranks of man she finds chapels of her own; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, who yet secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third Sister, who is also the youngest ——! Hush! whisper whilst we talk of *her*. Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live: but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele, rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not; and her eyes, rising so high, *might* be hidden by distance. But, being what they are, they cannot be hidden: through the treble veil of crape which she wears the fierce light of a blazing misery, that rests not for matins or for vespers, for noon of day or noon of night, for ebbing or for flowing tide, may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She also is the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been unheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest Sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with tiger's leaps. She carries no key; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And *her* name is *Mater Tenebrarum*,—Our Lady of Darkness.

1845

THE LITERATURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE LITERATURE OF POWER

In that great social organ which, collectively we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices, that may blend and often *do* so, but

capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of *knowledge;* and, secondly, the literature of *power.* The function of the first is to—*teach;* the function of the second is to—*move:* the first is a rudder; the second, an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the *mere* discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always *through* affections of pleasure and sympathy. Remotely, it may travel towards an object seated in what Lord Bacon calls *dry* light; but proximately, it does and must operate,—else it ceases to be a literature of *power,*—on and through that *humid* light which clothes itself in the mists and glittering *iris* of human passions, desires, and genial emotions. Men have so little reflected on the higher functions of literature as to find it a paradox if one should describe it as a mean or subordinate purpose of books to give information. But this is a paradox only in the sense which makes it honorable to be paradoxical. Whenever we talk in ordinary language of seeking information or gaining knowledge, we understand the words as connected with something of absolute novelty. But it is the grandeur of all truth which *can* occupy a very high place in human interests that it is never absolutely novel to the meanest of minds: it exists eternally, by way of germ or latent principle, in the lowest as in the highest, needing to be developed, but never to be planted. To be capable of transplantation is the immediate criterion of a truth that ranges on a lower scale. Besides which, there is a rarer thing than truth, namely,—*power,* or deep sympathy with truth. What is the effect, for instance, upon society, of children? By the pity, by the tenderness, and by the peculiar modes of admiration, which connect them-

selves with the helplessness, with the innocence, and with the simplicity of children, not only are the primal affections strengthened and continually renewed, but the qualities which are dearest in the sight of heaven,—the frailty, for instance, which appeals to forbearance, the innocence which symbolizes the heavenly, and the simplicity which is most alien from the worldly,—are kept up in perpetual remembrance, and their ideals are continually refreshed. A purpose of the same nature is answered by the higher literature, *viz.*, the literature of power. What do you learn from *Paradise Lost?* Nothing at all. What do you learn from a cookery-book? Something new, something that you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the wretched cookery-book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem? What you owe to Milton is not any knowledge, of which a million separate items are still but a million of advancing steps on the same earthly level; what you owe is *power,*—that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upwards, a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth. *All* the steps of knowledge, from first to last, carry you further on the same plane, but could never raise you one foot above your ancient level of earth: whereas the very *first* step in power is a flight—is an ascending movement into another element where earth is forgotten.

Were it not that human sensibilities are ventilated and continually called out into exercise by the great phenomena of infancy, or of real life as it moves through chance and change, or of literature as it recombines these elements in the mimicries of poetry, romance, etc., it is certain that, like any

animal power or muscular energy falling into disuse, all such sensibilities would gradually droop and dwindle. It is in relation to these great *moral* capacities of man that the literature of power, as contradistinguished from that of knowledge, lives and has its field of action. It is concerned with what is highest in man; for the Scriptures themselves never condescended to deal by suggestion or co-operation with the mere discursive understanding: when speaking of man in his intellectual capacity, the Scriptures speak not of the understanding, but of *"the understanding heart,"*—making the heart, *i. e.* the great *intuitive* (or non-discursive) organ, to be the interchangeable formula for man in his highest state of capacity for the infinite. Tragedy, romance, fairy tale, or epopee, all alike restore to man's mind the ideals of justice, of hope, of truth, of mercy, of retribution, which else (left to the support of daily life in its realities) would languish for want of sufficient illustration. What is meant, for instance, by *poetic justice?*—It does not mean a justice that differs by its object from the ordinary justice of human jurisprudence; for then it must be confessedly a very bad kind of justice; but it means a justice that differs from common forensic justice by the degree in which it *attains* its object, a justice that is more omnipotent over its own ends, as dealing—not with the refractory elements of earthly life, but with the elements of its own creation, and with materials flexible to its own purest preconceptions. It is certain that, were it not for the Literature of Power, these ideals would often remain amongst us as mere arid notional forms; whereas, by the creative forces of man put forth in literature, they gain a vernal life of restoration, and germinate into vital activities. The commonest novel, by moving in alliance with human

fears and hopes, with human instincts of wrong and right, sustains and quickens those affections. Calling them into action, it rescues them from torpor. And hence the pre-eminency, over all authors that merely *teach* of the meanest that moves, or that teaches, if at all, indirectly *by* moving. The very highest work that has ever existed in the literature of Knowledge is but a *provisional* work: a book upon trial and sufferance, and *quamdiu bene se gesserit.* Let its teaching be even partially revised, let it be but expanded,—nay, even let its teaching be but placed in a better order,—and instantly it is superseded. Whereas the feeblest works in the Literature of Power, surviving at all, survive as finished and unalterable amongst men. For instance, the *Principia* of Sir Isaac Newton was a book *militant* on earth from the first. In all stages of its progress it would have to fight for its existence: 1st, as regards absolute truth; 2dly, when that combat was over, as regards its form or mode of presenting the truth. And as soon as a La Place, or anybody else, builds higher upon the foundations laid by this book, effectually he throws it out of the sunshine into decay and darkness; by weapons won from this book he superannuates and destroys this book, so that soon the name of Newton remains as a mere *nominis umbra,* but his book, as a living power, has transmigrated into other forms. Now, on the contrary, the *Iliad,* the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, the *Othello* or *King Lear,* the *Hamlet* or *Macbeth,* and the *Paradise Lost* are not militant but triumphant forever as long as the languages exist in which they speak or can be taught to speak. They never *can* transmigrate into new incarnations. To reproduce *these* in new forms, or variations, even if in some things they should be improved, would be to plagiarize. A good steam-engine is properly

superseded by a better. But one lovely pastoral valley is not superseded by another, nor a statue of Praxiteles by a statue of Michael Angelo. These things are separated not by imparity, but by disparity. They are not thought of as unequal under the same standard, but as different in *kind,* and, if otherwise equal, as equal under a different standard. Human works of immortal beauty and works of nature in one respect stand on the same footing: they never absolutely repeat each other, never approach so near as not to differ; and they differ not as better and worse, or simply by more and less: they differ by undecipherable and incommunicable differences, that cannot be caught by mimicries, that cannot be reflected in the mirror of copies, that cannot become ponderable in the scales of vulgar comparison.

1848

NOTES

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR CLASS-ROOM DISCUSSIONS OR FOR WRITTEN REPORTS

1.—What is the main idea, or the main course of thought, of the assigned selection? If the selection is a narrative, tell the story; if it contains characters, name their chief traits. Aim at brevity, coherence, and exactness.

2.—What state of mind, or state of feeling, did the selection create in you? (E.g., pleasure, hope, sympathy, relief, complacency, joy, hilarity, excitement, enthusiasm, repose; or pain, tedium, perplexity, oppressiveness, fear, sadness, etc.)

3.—Point out passages in the selections which illustrate the statements in the introductions.

4.—After having learned what an author's chief interests and views are, try to apply them in your own life by pointing out what that author would probably have thought or felt concerning anything within your personal experience or observation. What scenes, incidents, or persons known to you would he presumably find interesting? What would be his attitude towards present-day problems? (This exercise is not intended to make the student permanently a blind disciple of any author, but merely to deepen his understanding of each author's point of view by applying it, at least for a brief period of time, to actual life).

5.—Read any one of the books or articles listed below in the bibliographies of each author, and report in what respects it added to your knowledge or appreciation of the author. (Individual assignments feasible).

6.—Read some of the critical opinions upon the author, collected in C. W. Moulton's *Library of Literary Criticism*; and point out passages in the selections which seem to you to support (or to refute) those opinions. (Individual assignments feasible).

SELECTED READING LIST FOR THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Introductory Works. For an outline of the pre-romantic and the romantic periods, see Ernest Bernbaum's *Guide through*

the Romantic Movement, Nelson, 1930, which includes bibliographies; or C. H. Herford's *Age of Wordsworth*, Macmillan, 1897.—The chief features of the German and the French romantic movements are sketched in Edgar C. Knowlton's *Outline of World Literature*, Nelson, 1929.

Works on Pre-Romanticism. Representative specimens from the eighteenth-century predecessors of the Romantics are given in Ernest Bernbaum's *Selections from the Pre-Romantic Movement*, Nelson, 1929.—On the history of pre-romanticism, see: W. L. Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, Ginn, 1893; H. A. Beers, *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, Holt, 1898; Edward Dowden, *The French Revolution and English Literature*, Scribner, 1897; Ernest Bernbaum, *English Poets of the Eighteenth Century*, Scribner, 1919; Oswald Doughty, *English Lyric in the Age of Reason*, O'Connor, 1922; and H. G. De Maar, *History of Modern English Romanticism*, Oxford Univ., 1924. For beginners, Phelps, though obsolete in some respects, is still the most convenient introduction. In more advanced study, the cautionary remarks of R. D. Havens in *Studies in Philology*, January, 1928, and in *Publ. Mod. Lang. Asso.*, June, 1929, are valuable.

Works on the Romantic Period. For biography, bibliography, and the commonplaces of criticism, consult: *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885 ff.; Robert Chambers, *Cyclopedia of English Literature*, Lippincott, 1902; *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, xi–xiii, Camb. Univ., 1914–16; and Charles W. Moulton, *The Library of Literary Criticism* (Malkan), 8 vols., 1902.

For the historical development, see: H. A. Beers, *A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century*, Holt, 1901; W. J. Courthope, *A History of English Poetry*, v–vi, Macmillan, 1903–05; Arthur Symons, *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*, Dutton, 1909; Oliver Elton, *A Survey of English Literature: 1780–1830*, Macmillan, 1912.

For the economic and social history of the period, see W. L. Mathieson, *England in Transition: 1789–1832*, Longmans, 1920.

A NOTE ON THE SELECTED READING LISTS FOR EACH AUTHOR

In compiling the Reading Lists given below for each author, I have tried to choose, out of the huge number of available books and articles, the following: (1) the best book of selections, (2) the best complete edition, (3) the best biography,

(4) five or six of the most important critical estimates, including, if possible, one representative anti-romantic estimate. A good, and, if extant, an inexpensive book of selections is given first because that, rather than a "complete works," is what a student will want first of all if he has become interested in an author. The length of complete works soon proves discouraging to most readers.

WILLIAM BLAKE

SELECTED READING LIST. *Selected Poems*, ed. Basil de Sélincourt, World's Classics, Oxford Univ., 1928.—Approximately complete is *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, Nonesuch Press, 1927 (strongly recommended).

The best biography is Mona Wilson's, Nonesuch Press, 1927.

Important criticisms are: Basil de Sélincourt, *William Blake*, Scribners, 1909; S. F. Damon, *William Blake*, Constable, 1924 (detailed interpretation and commentary); Helen C. White, *The Mysticism of William Blake*, Univ. Wis., 1927.—For a typically unsympathetic interpretation, see Paul Elmer More, *Shelburne Essays*, iv, Putnam, 1906.—Useful is Max Plowman's *Introduction to the Study of Blake*, Dent, 1927.

14.—TO THE MUSES. In the manner of the eighteenth century, yet voicing a desire for what that century missed. "In these lines the eighteenth century dies to music" (Symons).

14.—THE DIVINE IMAGE. A protest against an idealism that is abstract and not concrete. The virtues are to be seen not only in God but also in Man.—Much admired by Coleridge.

16.—THE TIGER. In even the most forbidding appearances of our universe there is beauty and divine purpose, although that purpose may seem to us inscrutable.—Admired by Charles Lamb.

17.—THE GARDEN OF LOVE. The natural instincts,—i.e., to Blake, the divine instincts,—are killed by restrictive laws.

18.—AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE. Not revised for publication by Blake, this remains a disconnected series of aphorisms, inveighing against cruelty to animals, physical punishment, militarism, agnosticism, etc.

20.—TO THE DEISTS. The Monk represents meek and nonresistant Christianity; Charlemaine, government by the sword; Voltaire, etc., the sceptical doubter.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

SELECTED READING LIST. We are less well provided with good texts of Coleridge than in the case of any other of the great Romantics. A convenient selection of both his poetry and his prose is H. W. Garrod's (Oxford Univ.). A good selection of the poetry is Sir Henry Newbolt's (Nelson). The most useful complete edition of the poems is James D. Campbell's, Macmillan, 1893; but university libraries should also own E. H. Coleridge's, 2 vols., Oxford Univ., 1912. The best edition of *Biographia Literaria* is by John Shawcross, 2 vols., Oxford Univ., 1907. The best edition of the *Shaksperian Criticisms* is Thomas M. Raysor's, Harvard Univ., 1930. Professor Raysor is also preparing an edition of Coleridge's other criticisms.

The best biography is James D. Campbell's, prefixed to his edition of the poems, Macmillan, 1893.

Important criticisms are: Walter Pater, in *Appreciations*, Macmillan, 1889; Theodore Watts-Dunton, in *Chambers's Cyclopedia*, iii, 1–10, Lippincott, 1903; John Shawcross, Introduction to edition of *Biographia Literaria*, Oxford Univ., 1907; Alice D. Snyder, *The Reconciliation of Opposites*, Univ. Mich., 1918; Claud Howard, *Coleridge's Idealism*, Badger, 1924; J. L. Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu*, Houghton, 1927 (highly recommended); and T. M. Raysor's Introductions to the editions listed above.

An unsympathetic view is Leslie Stephen's, in *Hours in a Library*, iv, Putnam; and of disputed value is H. l'A. Fausset, *S. T. Coleridge*, Cape, 1926.

23.—THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

How the Composition of the Poem Originated

Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xiv, wrote as follows:

During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbors, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect), that a series of poems might be

composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed that my endeavors should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before him. . . . With this view I wrote *The Ancient Mariner*.

Wordsworth (c. 1835) said to Alexander Dyce:

"*The Ancient Mariner* was founded on a strange dream, which a friend of Coleridge had, who fancied he saw a skeleton ship, with figures in it. We had both determined to write some poetry for a monthly magazine, the profits of which were to defray the expenses of a little excursion we were to make together. *The Ancient Mariner* was intended for this periodical, but was too long. I had very little share in the composition of it, for I soon found that the style of Coleridge and myself would not assimilate. Besides the lines (in the fourth part):

> 'And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
> As is the ribbed sea-sand'—

I wrote the stanza (in the first part):

> 'He holds him with his glittering eye—
> The Wedding-Guest stood still,
> And listens like a three-years' child:
> The Mariner hath his will'—

and four or five lines more in different parts of the poem, which I could not now point out. The idea of '*shooting an albatross' was mine; for I had been reading Shelvocke's Voyages, which probably Coleridge never saw.* I also suggested the reanimation of the dead bodies, to work the ship."

In 1843 Wordsworth dictated to Miss Fenwick the following (in commenting on his *We Are Seven*):

In reference to this poem I will here mention one of the most remarkable facts in my own poetic history and that of Mr. Coleridge. In the autumn of 1797 he, my sister, and myself, started from Alfoxden, pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem, to be sent to *The New Monthly Magazine* set up by Phillips the bookseller, and edited by Dr. Aikin. Accordingly we set off and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet, and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of *The Ancient Mariner*, founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend, Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention; but certain parts I suggested:—for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's *Voyages* a day or two before that while doubling Cape Horn they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or fifteen feet. "Suppose," said I, "you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime." The incident was thought fit for the purpose and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time; at least, not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that to me memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular:—

> 'And listened like a three years' child;
> The Mariner had his will.'

These trifling contributions, all but one (which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded) slipped out of his mind as they well might. As we endeavored to proceed con-

jointly (I speak of the same evening) our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. We returned after a few days from a delightful tour, of which I have many pleasant, and some of them droll enough, recollections. We returned by Dulverton to Alfoxden. *The Ancient Mariner* grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds, and we began to think of a volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium. Accordingly I wrote *The Idiot Boy*, *Her Eyes Are Wild*, etc., *We Are Seven*, *The Thorn*, and some others.

The History of the Text

The form of *The Ancient Mariner* which, after several revisions, Coleridge finally brought it to, and in which we now read it, differs in notable ways from his first version. That version was published in the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. In it there were many archaic words, after the manner of the ancient ballads; e.g., "Marinere," "withouten," "yspread," "eldritch," "ne" (for "nor"), "ee" (for "eye"). Such archaisms were reduced in number when the next version of the poem appeared, in the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). At some unknown time between 1800 and 1817 (Professor Lowes plausibly suggests c. 1802), Coleridge made the last important changes in the poem; viz. (1) he modified some of the passages, (2) he added that marginal prose gloss which adds incalculably to the artistic effect, and (3) he prefixed the following Latin motto concerning dæmons, which he took from the *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* (p. 68) of the seventeenth century divine, Thomas Burnet. These three changes did not appear in print until 1817, when what is essentially the final form of *The Ancient Mariner* was published in Coleridge's *Sibylline Leaves*.

The Latin Motto and Its Translation

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit, et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ

minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.

I readily believe that there are more invisible beings in the universe than visible. But who shall explain to us the nature, the rank and kinship, the distinguishing marks and graces of each? What do they do? Where do they dwell? The human mind has circled round this knowledge, but never attained to it. Yet there is profit, I do not doubt, in sometimes contemplating in the mind, as in a picture, the image of a greater and better world: lest the intellect, habituated to the petty details of daily life, should be contracted within too narrow limits and settle down wholly on trifles. But, meanwhile, a watchful eye must be kept on truth, and proportion observed, that we may distinguish the certain from the uncertain, day from night.

The Sources of The Ancient Mariner

As will appear from the following notes, the great commentary on *The Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* is Professor John Livingston Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (1927), which renders obsolete all previous suggestions as to the sources of these poems, and all previous annotation of them. The most significant point in this learned treatise, to anyone who is beginning the serious study of poetry, is this: that, although these wonderfully beautiful poems of Coleridge seem the product of mere visionary fantasy, there is scarcely a notable detail in them which is not drawn from actual human experience. In other words, what seems so fantastic is much more realistic (objectively and subjectively) than one would suppose. When Coleridge quoted Burnet's "a watchful eye must be kept on truth," in the motto of the poem, he quoted to the point.

23.—Coleridge's "argument," i.e., summary, reads: "How a ship, having passed the Line [Equator] was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancient Mariner came back to his own country."—See the map in Lowes, opposite page 228, describing Captain Shelvocke's voyage round the world. Many British explorers had sailed the Ancient Mariner's course, and recorded their adventures. "The basic structure of the voyage regarded as a voyage is as austerely true to fact as an Admiralty report." (Lowes, 124.)

23.—14. *The Wedding Guest.* The impressiveness of the tale is enhanced by its enthralling one bent on so urgent an

occasion as a wedding. William Taylor's translation of Bürger's *Lenore*, and Schiller's *Ghostseer* (which Coleridge dramatized), may have suggested this feature (See Lowes, 251 and notes).

23.—12. *Eftsoons.* Immediately.

24.—10. Shows they are crossing the Equator.

24.—12. *Bassoon.* A deep-toned musical wind-instrument. Coleridge's friend, Thomas Poole, had recently been acquiring a bassoon for the Stowey church-choir.

25.—5. Coleridge had read much about the polar regions, including *The Memoirs and Travels of Count de Benyowsky*, translated in 1790; and Frederick Marten's *Voyage into Spitzbergen and Greenland*, translated in 1694. The latter work (Hamburg edition, 1675) has a picture of "snowy clifts"; see Lowes, opposite page 144.

25.—11–12. These noises, according to the arctic travelers whose voyages Coleridge had read, are characteristic features of the region.

25.—13. *Albatross.* Wordsworth, and probably Coleridge after him, read in Capt. George Shelvocke's *Voyage Round the World by Way of the Great South Sea* (1726) pp. 71–72, an impressive description of the desolate, almost uninhabited antarctic,—sunless, dismal, where, says Shelvocke "one would think it impossible any thing living could subsist," and where they "had not had the sight of one fish of any kind . . . nor one sea bird, except a disconsolate black Albatross." Shelvocke's mate, Hatley, regarding the bird as responsible for the foul weather, shot it (See De Quincey's comments on this: Works, ii, 145). This was not the great albatross, which has a wing-spread of about twelve feet, and could not be hung about a mariner's neck; but the "sooty" albatross, a much smaller species (Lowes, 226–227).

25.—17. *The food it ne'er had eat.* The first version had "The Marineres gave it biscuit-worms," a realistic touch taken from such experiences of half-starved sailors as are recorded in Eden's *History of Travayle* (Lowes, 150).

25.—25. *shroud.* rope.

25.—26. *vespers.* evenings, or evening church-services.

26.—3. *cross-bow.* Note the artistry of this choice of a weapon,—which, like other touches in the poem, suggests the past,—c. the sixteenth century.

26.—5. *upon the right.* Indicating that the vessel has rounded Cape Horn and turned northwards into the Pacific.

26.—7. Originally, "And broad as a weft, upon the left," a weft being a fine old sea-term for an ensign, which Coleridge had probably picked up in the harbor of Bristol, but

which was condemned as obscure by landlubber-reviewers (Lowes, 261).

26.—19. See the picture of the glorious sun, in the guise of the trinitarian godhead, in Lowes, opposite p. 138, from a seventeenth century book of travels.

26.—20. *uprist.* uprose.

27.—5. *hot and copper sky.* Mr. Herbert Wright (*Nineteenth Century and After*, xcix, 732–744 May, 1926) would derive this from a personal experience of Coleridge's, previously expressed in his poem *Respiration*. On the other hand, Lowes, 158, quotes Gilbert White, *Selborne*, chap. lxv., and Thomas Burnet's *Telluris Theoria Sacra*.

26.—25. *The fair breeze.* The trade winds, constantly mentioned by the voyagers.

27.—19. Coleridge had read Capt. James Cook's *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, from which Lowes, 81, quotes such passages as these: "During a calm . . . some parts of the sea seemed covered with a kind of slime; and some small sea animals were swimming about . . . that had a white, or shining appearance. . . . When they began to swim about, which they did, with equal ease, upon their back, sides, or belly, they emitted the brightest colors of the most precious gems. . . . Sometimes they . . . assumed various tints of blue. . . . But . . . the color was chiefly a beautiful, pale green, tinged with a burnished gloss; and, in the dark, it had a faint appearance of glowing fire. They . . . proved to be . . . probably an animal which has a share in producing . . . that lucid appearance, often observed near ships at sea, in the night." Coleridge had also read much about "slime-fishes" in Marten's *Voyage into Spitzbergen* (Lowes, 88).

27.—22. *death fires.* Phosphorescent gleams which appear on ships' riggings, actually electrical, but by sailors regarded with superstitious dread.

28.—7. *Instead of the cross.* It was with a cross upon the forehead that, according to some legends, the Wandering Jew, who forbade Christ to rest upon his way to Golgotha, was branded; and this was also reputed to be the brand of Cain (Lowes, 259, 245).

28.—18. *wist.* knew.

29.—9. *weal.* good.

29.—10. Phantom ships were common in the travelers' tales (See Lowes 275, 168).

30.—12. "A tale of two spectral figures casting dice on a phantom ship for the soul of an eternal wanderer was current on the seas" (Lowes, 277, referring to the Dutch tale of Falkenberg).

30.—15. This vivid description of a tropical sunset is not extravagant, but based upon travelers' reports.

30.—26. *The hornèd Moon.* Has been condemned as fantastic, because the new moon does not rise at dawn. But this is the waning moon, which may rise at that time. The bright star within the moon's tip may be said to be an American star, for it was originally observed in New England, and was reported by Cotton Mather to the Royal Society in London, a quotation from whose letter was noted by Coleridge in the *Philosophical Transactions* (Lowes, 180).

32.—19. The travelers told of climates in which dead bodies lay "without any stinke or corruption" (Lowes, 292).

33.—10–19. Again, not fantastical, but suggested by voyagers like Father Bourzes, Bartram, Capt. Cook, Sir Richard Hawkins, and Dampier (Lowes, 40–53).

33.—29. Up to this, daemons have controlled the vessel; but, after the mariner's blessing of the creatures of the deep, it is guided (not, as Wordsworth had originally suggested by the dead men, but rather) by angelic spirits. This is partly from a pious legend by the fourth century Bishop Paulinus (Lowes, 283).

34.—6. *Silly.* Futile, because dry.

34.—23–26. *Fire-flags . . . wan stars.* Travelers had given accounts of seeing the stars through the Aurora Borealis (Lowes, 190).

36.—13. *Sky-lark.* In the first version, *lavrock* (lark), a pseudo-Chaucerian reminiscence, like *jargoning* below (Lowes, 334).

39.—19ff. This stanza resembles a passage in a forgotten poem of 1747 by G. Masters (cited by H. O. White in *Times Lit. Suppl.*, Jan. 14, 1926).

40.—9–12. There was not only exquisite art in ending "the whole night-mare story among the clear fresh sounds and lights of the bay where it began," as Walter Pater has observed; but Coleridge was still remaining true to the spirit of the voyagers' tales, which not infrequently strike this note, half-incredulous, of "Home at last!" (Cf. Lowes, 154).

42.—22. *Ivy-tod.* Ivy-bush.

43.—6. *Sound.* The scientific transactions which Coleridge had been reading dwelt much upon the sound accompanying earthquakes (Lowes, 289).

44.—13. This stanza, and the marginal prose, imply that the Ancient Mariner must undergo a penance similar to that of the Wandering Jew (Lowes, 249).

46.—Love. Expresses Coleridge's love for Sarah Hutchinson (Mrs. Wordsworth's sister). For Professor Raysor's recent

disclosures concerning this affair, see his article, "Coleridge and 'Asra,'" *Studies in Philology*, July, 1929.

49.—15. *Mastiff, which.* In first edition, "mastiff bitch." Charles Lamb suggested the change.

50.—29. *One red leaf.* Upon the sources of Christabel, there is next to no information that is convincing; but between this passage (and other nature-descriptions in the poem) and passages in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, there are striking similarities.

53.—12–15. She pretended to faint because, being an evil spirit, she could not cross the threshold except by being carried.

53.—31. Animals were believed to have an instinctive perception of the supernatural.

57.—7. There is some evidence that in one of the manuscripts, now lost, this passage stood:

> A sight to dream of, not to tell,
> Hideous, deformed, and pale of hue.

60.—8. *Pike.* peak. 9. *Ghyll.* valley.

60.—23. *Plight.* Perhaps "state"; but more likely archaic for "plait."

62.—1. "The best and sweetest lines that I ever wrote," remarks Coleridge to Poole in 1813. Contrast it with Byron's treatment of the same theme in *Childe Harold*, iii, stanza 94.—Coleridge's estrangement from Southey may have intensified the poignancy of these lines.

70.—KUBLA KHAN. The exact reading of the passage from Samuel Purchas' *Pilgrimage* (ed. 1617, p. 472) which Coleridge remembered, is: "In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteene miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddowes, pleasant springs, delightfull Streames, and all sorts of beasts of chace and game, and in the middest thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure, which may be removed from place to place." The historical Kubla Khan was a Mongol emperor of the thirteenth century.

70.—3. *Alph.* Virgil and other ancients told of the Alpheus, which, like the Nile of the legends, sank beneath earth and ocean, and rose again in a fountain (Lowes, 393). See the passage from Bruce's *Nile*, in Ernest Bernbaum, *Selections from the Pre-Romantic Movement* (Nelson), 1929.

70.—4. *Caverns measureless to man.* Explorers recorded such unfathomable caverns in the Nile regions (Lowes, 391).

70.—8–9. Purchas, in his *Pilgrimes* (not the same work as that quoted above); tells of Aloadine, the Old Man of the Mountain, having "a goodly garden, furnished with the best trees and fruits he could find, adorned with divers Palaces

and houses of pleasure" (Lowes, 361).—As for the remaining touches in the picture, see the passages from Bartram's *Travels*, in the *Selections from the Pre-Romantic Movement* (Lowes, 366).

70.—12. *That deep romantic chasm*, etc. Recollected from Abyssinian landscapes described in Bruce's *Nile* (Lowes, 377).

70.—14. (Lowes, 399) cites from William Collins' *The Passions*, 64–66:

> Thro' glades and glooms the mingled measure stole;
> Or o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay
> Round an holy calm diffusing . . .

Professor Lane Cooper (*Mod. Phil.*, Jan. 1906; *Publ. Mod. Lang. Asso.*, June, 1928) finds the association of "holy" with demoniac love a repulsive blemish. But does it not merely suggest that such a spot, to the awestruck listener, would seem unapproachable?

70.—17–28. Many recollections of fountainous scenes in Bartram's *Travels*. (Lowes, 367.)

70.—30. Both in Purchas and in Bruce, near passages read by Coleridge, there is mention of priests counseling concerning war (Lowes, 397).

71.—3. *Mingled measure.* See note on p. 70, l.14.

71.—7–24. Aloadine (see on l.8 above), according to Purchas, maintained such a "Paradise," where his young warriors were ministered unto by "Damosells skilfull in Songs and Instruments of Musicke," to their undoing (Lowes, 362).

71.—9. Bruce's *Nile* deals largely with Abyssinia.

71.—11. *Mount Abora.* In Coleridge's dream, there apparently coalesced Purchas' hill Amara, Bruce's river Abola, and Milton's

> . . . where Abassin kings their issue guard
> Mount Amara (though this by some supposed
> True Paradise) under the Ethiop line
> By Nilus' head.—*Par. Lost*, iv, 280–283.

71.—19–20. A recollection of the passage about the savage king in Bruce's *Nile* (given in the *Selections from the Pre-Romantic Movement*).

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Selected Reading List. Among numerous good volumes of selections, perhaps the best are Edward Dowden's, Ginn, 1897; Viscount Grey's, Nelson, 1910; and Howard J. Hall's, Scott Foresman, 1928.—The complete *Poetical Works*, ad-

mirably edited by Thomas Hutchinson, in one inexpensive volume, is strongly recommended.—*The Prelude* has been edited from the manuscripts, in a highly scholarly manner, by Ernest de Sélincourt, Clarendon Press, 1926.

The standard biography is by G. M. Harper, Scribner, 1916,—revised and (disadvantageously) shortened, 1929.

Important criticisms are: Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, Macmillan, 1888; Émile H. Legouis, *The Youth of Wordsworth*, Dent, 1896; C. T. Winchester, *William Wordsworth: How to Know Him* (the best introduction), Bobbs Merrill, 1916; Marjorie L. Bartow, *Wordsworth's Theory of Poetic Diction*, Yale Univ., 1917; A. V. Dicey, *The Statesmanship of Wordsworth*, Clarendon Press, 1917; Arthur Beatty, *William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art*, Univ. Wis., 2nd ed., 1927. Cf. on the latter, Melvin Rader in *Modern Philology*, Nov., 1928.—For an unsympathetic view, see S. de Madariaga, in *Shelley, Calderon, etc.*, Constable, 1920; and for a hostile attack, see Aldous Huxley, *Holy Face and Other Essays*, The Fleuron, 1929.

73.—Lines Written in Early Spring. One of the basic themes: the Universe is fair and happy, but Man perverts it.

74.—Expostulation and Reply. "William" is Wordsworth in youth; "Matthew" is of the same type as his old teacher "a friend," says W., "somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy."

75.—20. *a wise passiveness.* The state of mind more precisely described in *Tintern Abbey*, 38–50. Observe that W. does not represent wise passiveness as the *only* way to receive truth, but as *one* way, too much neglected by the merely intellectual seeker.

75.—26. *Conversing.* Communing with the universe.

76.—22. *May teach you.* Anti-Wordsworthians rail against this as if W. had written "always will teach you."

77.—Tintern Abbey. "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol, in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol" W.—The most important of his early poems. The beauty of Nature enables the poet to feel, despite the apparent evils of life, the fundamental harmony of the Universe. Tennyson praised this poem, especially lines 95 ff., as "giving the sense of the permanent in the transitory." Observe also the distinctions drawn between childhood, youth, and maturity.

80.—26. *my dearest Friend.* Dorothy Wordsworth.

82.—We Are Seven. "The little girl who is the heroine I met within the area of Goodrich Castle in the year 1793" W.—The little maid's inability to conceive of death as the ordinary understanding conceives of it was not in W's view mere ignorance. "Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature must that man be who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational creature, is endowed" (W's *Essays on Epitaphs*). Compare the theme with that of the Ode: *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* (p. 109). In the *Ode*, the lofty theme is treated in the grand manner; here, in the simplest.

In that simplicity of its style, *We Are Seven* was one of the boldest of the experiments attempted in the *Lyrical Ballads*. "When," says W., "it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my sister, and said, 'A prefatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea-meal with greater pleasure if my task were finished.' I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza thus:—

'A little child, dear brother Jem,'—

I objected to the rhyme, 'dear brother Jem,' as being ludicrous, but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching-in our friend, James T[obin]'s name, who was familiarly called Jem. He was the brother of the dramatist, and this reminds me of an anecdote which it may be worth while here to notice. The said Jem got a sight of the *Lyrical Ballads* as it was going through the press at Bristol, during which time I was residing in that city. One evening he came to me with a grave face, and said, 'Wordsworth, I have seen the volume that Coleridge and you are about to publish. There is one poem in it which I earnestly entreat you to cancel, for, if published, it will make you everlastingly ridiculous.' I answered that I felt much obliged by the interest he took in my good name as a writer, and begged to know what was the unfortunate piece he alluded to. He said, 'It is called *We Are Seven*.'—'Nay,' said I, 'that shall take its chance, however,' and he left me in despair."

Observe that in 1815 W. omitted the too prosaic "dear brother Jem" from the first line.

Coleridge disagreed with W. on this subject of a child's alleged perception of immortality; and in 1817, in *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xxii, cited *We Are Seven* and Stanza viii

of the *Ode* as instances of W's addiction to "thoughts and images too great for the subject."

84.—She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways.—The "Lucy poems" are W's most poignant expressions of love and grief. Who Lucy was has been much debated. She may have been a purely imaginary character; but the apparently deeply personal sentiments of the poem, combined with W's customary avoidance in this period of subjects not drawn from his own experience, make this hypothesis unlikely. Professor de Sélincourt (ed. *Prelude*, p. 595) suggests that Lucy may have been Mary Hutchinson, later the poet's wife, but there is evidence against that possibility. Professor Harper is "convinced that the Lucy poems record, in the delicate distillation of memory, a real experience of youthful love and bewildering grief. The maiden whom he loved was a child. He loved her with the ennobling passion of a high-minded boy. She died, but her image survived in his heart." He thinks it likely that Lucy died in the summer of 1788 (*Times Lit. Suppl.*, 11 Nov., 1926; see also other discussions of the subject, by Sir Anton Bertram, Mr. Gordon G. Wordsworth, and Professor Legouis, *ibid.*, 15 July, 22 July, and 9 Dec.).

84.—13. *Dove.* A stream in the Lake country. Professor Harper inclines to believe that Hartsop Hall, a farmhouse in this region, a region familiar to W. at the time in question, may have been the home of Lucy or at least near it.

84.—24. *Three years she grew in sun and shower.* Professor Legouis does not believe that W. would have described a settled farmer's child as living during her first three years out-of-doors. He suggests, in view of W's well-known interest in gypsies, that Lucy may have been a gypsy-babe "adopted by some cottager near the springs of Dove, where the poet was to meet her long afterwards, now a perfect English country maid, 'turning her wheel beside an English fire'" (*Times Lit. Suppl.*, 9 Dec. 1926).

Interesting as such speculations are, still more important is the kind of education which Nature gives to Lucy (without Lucy thinking of it as an education).

85.—6. *law and impulse.* Does not the next stanza indicate what this means,—the last three lines, the law; the first three, the impulse?

86.—A Slumber Did my Spirit Seal. To be commended to those who identify Romanticism with diffuseness and unrestraint. The appalling unexpectedness, suddenness, and finality of such a bereavement expressed in one of the sublimest tragical dirges of our tongue.

86.—MICHAEL. W. once said that there was some foundation in fact, however slight, for every poem he had ever written of a narrative kind; and this was certainly true of *Michael*.

"The sheepfold, on which so much of the poem turns, remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character and circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house we lived in at Townend, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere. The name of the Evening Star was not in fact given to this house, but to another on the same side of the valley, more to the north."—W.

"In the two poems, *The Brothers* and *Michael*, I have attempted to draw a picture of the domestic affections, as I know they exist amongst a class of men who are now almost confined to the north of England. They are small independent *proprietors* of land, here called statesmen, men of respectable education, who daily labor on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population, if these men are placed above poverty. But if they are proprietors of small estates which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections acquire amongst such men is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired laborers, farmers, and the manufacturing poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet on which they are written, which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances, when they would otherwise be forgotten. It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man, from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn. This class of men is rapidly disappearing. . . . The two poems which I have mentioned were written with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply. . . . The poems are faithful copies from Nature." W.—to Charles James Fox, 14 Jan., 1801.

"I have attempted to give a picture of a man, of strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart: the parental affection, and the love of property (*landed* property), including the feelings of inheritance, home, and personal and family independence. . . . In writing it I had your character often before my eyes; and sometimes thought that I was delineating such a man as you yourself would have been under the same circumstances." W. to Thomas Poole, 1801.

86.—18. *Greenhead Ghyll.* A narrow valley, with steep

sides, near W.'s cottage. All the places named are in the vicinity,—Grasmere, Easedale, Dunmail-Raise, etc.

93.—32. *Richard Bateman.* "The story alluded to is well known in the country. The chapel is called Ings Chapel, and it is on the right-hand side of the road leading from Kendal to Ambleside." W.

100.—It Is Not To Be Thought of. 7. Quoted from Samuel Daniels, an Elizabethan poet congenial to Wordsworth. When this sonnet and the following were first published, Napoleon was the military master of Europe, and England was the solitary hope of the democratic "cause of men."

100.—My Heart Leaps Up. 26. *natural piety.* Reverence for that unconscious love of nature, and harmony with it, which the child manifests. The last three lines of this poem became the motto of the *Ode on Immortality* (see p. 109).

101.—London, 1802. This sonnet, and the next two, carry a message of the highest importance to any nation threatened, like our own, by the temptations of prosperity. "This was written immediately after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France. This must be borne in mind, or else the reader may think that in this and the succeeding sonnets I have exaggerated the mischief engendered and fostered among us by undisturbed wealth." W.

101.—1. To Milton, Wordsworth was bound by a common love of liberty, and by addiction to the simple life and to the studious. His enthusiasm for his great predecessor was already strong in his college days; see *The Prelude*, iii, 283 ff.

101.—14. *the lowliest duties.* For many years, obedient to a sense of citizenship, Milton rendered political and literary services to the cause of the Puritan Commonwealth, as pamphleteer and as secretary of state.

101.—Written in London. 15. *Friend.* Coleridge.

102.—Composed Upon Westminster Bridge. To be borne in mind whenever we think of W. as a poet only of nature and of moral being. The majesty of a great city about to awaken into life has never been more beautifully expressed. "To Wordsworth," says Walter Bagehot, "has been vouchsafed the last grace of the self-denying artist: you think neither of him nor his style, but you cannot help thinking of —you must recall—the exact phrase, the very sentiment he wished" (*Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art*).

102.—It Is a Beauteous Evening. 23. *Dear Child* For-

merly supposed to refer to Dorothy Wordsworth, this is now known to refer to Caroline, the natural daughter of W. and Annette Vallon.

104.—The Solitary Reaper. Partly from W's own experience, and partly from that of Thomas Wilkinson, who had written in his *Tour of Scotland;* "Passed a female who was reaping alone; she sung in Erse, as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard: her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more." Note that the final phrase is almost literally quoted in the last line of the poem.

105.—She Was a Phantom of Delight. At once a tribute to W.'s wife, Mary Hutchinson, and his characterization of ideal womanhood. The word "machine" (l. 14) was not as prosaic in 1804 as it has become.

106.—I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud. "Written at Townend, Grasmere. The daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves"—W.

"When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. . . . As we went along there were more, and yet more; and, at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw there was a long belt of them along the shore. . . . I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones, about and above them; some rested their heads on these stones as on a pillow for weariness; and the rest tossed, and reeled, and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the lake. They looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing. . . . There was here and there a little knot, and a few stragglers higher up; but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity, unity, and life of that one busy highway." Dorothy Wordsworth, *Journal*, April 15, 1802.

107.—13–14. Mrs. Wordsworth wrote these lines.

107.—Ode to Duty. The motto: "What urges me on now is not so much good counsel as habit; so that my condition is not that I am able to do right, but rather that I am unable to do wrong."

"The ode is on the model of Gray's *Ode to Adversity*, which is copied from Horace's *Ode to Fortune*." W.

109.—Ode: Intimations of Immortality. As this celebrated ode expresses a complex train of thoughts and feelings, its entire course should be followed before its details are examined. It passes through three phases: (1) the perception that in youth the universe has a freshness and glory which later fades (stanzas i-iv); (2) a suggestion that this

childish intuition of the divine and the immortal may be explained by the pre-existence of the soul (stanzas v-viii); and (3) the assertion of a reconciling faith that the loss of the childish vision is recompensed for by the love and wisdom attainable in maturity (stanzas ix-xiii). The second movement in this succession of ideas has received, partly because of its supposedly heretical nature, more attention than the others. That the conclusion to which W. comes at the end is the most important part of the poem is insisted upon by Professor Arthur Beatty (*William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art*, 2nd ed., 1927).

In the following passage W. himself asserts his firm belief in the truth of what may be called the child-psychology of the first part of the ode, and protests that he did not intend to be prosaically dogmatic about the theory of pre-existence suggested in the second:

"This was composed during my residence at Town-end, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere—

> 'A simple child,
> That lightly draws its breath,
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death?'
>
> [*We Are Seven*, 1-4]

But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character,

and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines—

'Obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;' etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendor which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of man presents an analogy in its favor. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the Immortality of the Soul, I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet."

The notion of pre-existence, i.e., of descent from Heaven and of the gradual forgetfulness, is Neo-Platonic, and is found in a well-known chapter in the fifth-century philosopher Proclus, a chapter already drawn upon by the poet Vaughan in *The Retreat*, and one which Coleridge may have called to W's attention. In any case, conversations with Coleridge were influential upon the *Ode* (see Professor John D. Rea's "Coleridge's Intimations of Immortality," *Mod. Phil.*, xxvi, 201; Nov. 1928). It should be noted, however, that by 1817 Coleridge is found protesting against W's terming "a six years' darling" "thou best philosopher" (*Biographia Literaria*, chap. xxii).

Emerson regarded the *Ode* as "the high-water mark which the intellect has reached in this age."

118.—30. Almost any kind of religion is preferable to materialism,—see *The Excursion*, iv, "Superstition better than Apathy." Proteus and Triton were Greek sea-gods. "The

suggestion is from Proclus, the phrasing in part from Spenser and Milton" (Rea; *op. cit.*, *Mod. Phil.*, xxvi, 211 n.).

119.—The Prelude.—The stages through which this poetical autobiography passed are shown in the admirable edition by Professor Ernest de Sélincourt (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1926). It was intended to be the introduction to a long poem, *The Recluse*, of which only the second part, *The Excursion*, was actually completed.

"Several years ago, when the author retired to his native mountains with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far nature and education had qualified him for such an employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That work, addressed to a dear friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the author's intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it, was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of man, nature, and society, and to be entitled *The Recluse;* as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.

"The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labor which he had proposed to himself; and the two works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the antechapel has to the body of a Gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor pieces, which have been long before the public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive reader to have such connection with the main work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices." . . . "The friend to whom the present poem is addressed was the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge." W.

121.—6. *When we chanced.* In France, during the Revolution.

122.—The Recluse. 23. *fit audience, etc.* Quoted from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vii, 31.

124.—17. *metropolitan.* Literally, of the mother-church, i.e., supreme.

129.—Preface to the Lyrical Ballads. Historically one of the most important discussions of the nature of poetry,

and intrinsically, despite some flaws owing to exaggeration or ambiguity, of permanent value. The following passages should be carefully pondered and discussed:

129.—8–9. "a selection of language really used by men."

129.—17. Why rustic life was chosen.

131.—5. His attack on poetic diction.

132.—5. The poet recognizes the harmony between man and nature.

132.—9. "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge."

133.—3. When new scientific knowledge becomes matter for poetry.

COLERIDGE (PROSE)

134.—Biographia Literaria, xiv, xvii, xviii. In these famous chapters, C. discusses some of the literary theories set forth by Wordsworth in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. In that Preface C. was, in a way, a collaborator; for it was intended to justify their styles of poetry, and its general principles originated in their conversations together. C's attack, it is important to note, is not directed against Wordsworth's whole case, but only against certain parts thereof. If, after reading these passages, the student will mark in Wordsworth's Preface those parts which Coleridge disagrees with, he may be surprised at their fewness. C. himself repeatedly emphasizes that his strictures are not general; see p. 135.18, p. 139.2. He implies, moreover that Wordsworth's practice in these respects is usually better than his theory; and in chapter xxii he holds that the defects of Wordsworth's poems are immeasurably outweighed by their excellences.

A careful comparison of Wordsworth's case with what may be called C's improvements upon it will give the student a better understanding of the nature of poetry and of the nature of criticism. Both the difficulties and the rewards of criticism,—i. e., of precise and philosophic thinking about literature,—are here illustrated brilliantly.

134.—11. *the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities*. One of C's most fundamental ideas. See Professor Alice D. Snyder's *The Reconciliation of Opposites as Employed by C.* (1918).

134.—24. *Davies*. The Elizabethan poet most resembling Wordsworth.

137.—14–16. Apply this to Burns to test C's soundness of opinion.

137.—29. *Triumpatus*, error for *Triumphatus*.

139.—4. This acceptance of Aristotle's *Poetics* should be pointed out to those who allege that the Romanticists and the Classicists are absolutely contradictory.

139.—Characteristics of Shakspere's Dramas. C. gave public lectures on Shakspere in 1808, 1810–13, and 1818. His notes were published in his *Literary Remains*, 1837–39. The passage here given is probably from the lectures of 1818. These lectures show Coleridge the leader in the romantic re-interpretation of Shakspere. The following ideas are especially characteristic: 1.—that Shakspere's wisdom and art are almost perfect; 2.—that he was influenced by his age, but not dominated by it; 3.—that his works have a unity, not mechanical, but organic; and 4.—that his characters are so true to human nature that they may be discussed as if they were real.

Compare the attitude towards Shakspere of Hazlitt, in *Hamlet* (in this volume, p. 180); and of Carlyle, in *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (volume vi).

140.—5. *As the Pantheon*, etc. From August Wilhelm Schlegel's *Lectures on Shakspere.*

140.—18–22. This parallel became a commonplace.

141.—9. Dr. Johnson, in his *Preface to Shakspere*, had already remarked: "Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation."

142.—15–19. From Schlegel (Lecture iv).

143.—3–8. From Schlegel (Lecture xii).

143.—28. *Bertram. All's Well That Ends Well*, I, i, 70–79.

143.—33. *Polonius.* In *Hamlet.*

144.—24. *Dogberry.* In *Much Ado About Nothing.*

144.—30. *Kotzebue.* A melodramatic German playwright, whose works were translated and played in London. The whole passage is another attack upon pre-romanticism.

146.—22. *Metastasio.* An Italian author of musical dramas.

147.—28–33. A passage to be commended to those who think the Romantics generally encourage the abnormal or bizarre.

CHARLES LAMB

Selected Reading List. The nearest approach to a good book of selections from Charles Lamb is Agnes Wilson's, Blackwood, 1901. His most important criticisms are well represented in E. M. W. Tillyard's edition, Cambr. Univ., 1923.—The standard edition of the complete works is that of E. V. Lucas, 7 vols., Putnam, 1903–06.

The best biography is by E. V. Lucas, Putnam, 1905.

Important criticisms are: Walter Pater, in *Appreciations*, Macmillan, 1889; C. T. Winchester, *A Group of English Essayists*, Macmillan, 1910; and Paul Elmer More, *Shelburne Essays*, ii and iv, Putnam, 1905–06.—Helpful is Bernard Lake, *General Introduction to Charles Lamb*, Leipsig, 1903.

149.—LETTER TO WORDSWORTH. Observe the candor with which L. mentions defects as well as merits in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*, like Coleridge's candor in *Biographia Literaria*.

149.—1. *present.* The second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, 2 vols.

149.—3. *Song of Lucy. Lucy Gray*, above p. 121.

150.—15. *St. Leon.* A novel by William Godwin.

150.—22. *Bottom.* Shakspere's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, i, 40.

150.—32–34. In an unfortunate comment on *The Ancient Mariner*, Wordsworth had remarked: "The poem of my friend has, indeed, great defects: first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of mariner or as a human being who, having been long under the control of supernatural impressions, might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural."

151.—30. *Don't much care if I never see a mountain*, etc. A passage which is characteristic of L., and which strikingly shows that not all the Romantics were nature-poets, but that some of them saw the beauty of cities. They complement one another.

153.—A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG. The title itself is humorous, for by a "dissertation," speaking literally, we mean an elaborate and learned discourse upon an intellectually important subject. Observe throughout the delightful use of hyperbole.

153.—13. *my friend M.* Thomas Manning. He had been in China, was interested in Chinese jest-books, and may actually have given L. the basis of the story. Similar stories, however, L. might have found in Porphyry (whom William Taylor was translating), in *The Turkish Spy*, and elsewhere.

153.—18. *Mundane Mutations.* Of course Confucius wrote no such work.

153.—26. *mast.* The nuts of forest-trees, chestnuts, acorns, etc.

154.—30. *crackling.* The crisp skin of roast pork.

156.—24. *assize town.* County town.

157.—17. *Locke.* The English philosopher.

157.—33. *mundus edibilis.* Edible world.

157.—34. *princeps obsoniorum.* The chief of delicacies.

158.—4. *amor immunditiae.* Love of evil.

158.—31. *radiant jellies.* Shooting stars were supposed to turn into jelly where they fell.

159.—3. From Coleridge's *Epitaph on an Infant.*

159.—9. *For such a tomb.* Milton wrote in his epitaph to Shakspere:

. . . So sepulchered in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

159.—11. *sapors.* Savors.

160.—6. *tame villatic fowl.* In Milton's poetic diction, domestic fowl.

160.—7. *brawn.* Boar's flesh, pickled or potted.

161.—28. *St. Omer's.* In France. A college of the Jesuits, who were famous for their training in logic and disputation. L. was not at school there.

161.—31. *per flagellationem extremam.* By flogging to death.

162.—5. *shallot.* An onion-like plant.

162.—Old China. This famous essay, revealing the possibility of enjoying happiness despite narrow means, was especially beloved by Wordsworth; and it may be termed a city-variation upon his theme, the blessings of the simple life.

163.—14. *hays.* An old English country dance.

163.—19. *Hyson.* Green tea.

163.—21. *speciosa miracula.* Shining wonders (Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 144, referring to the *Odyssey*).

163.—29. *Bridget.* L.'s sister, Mary Lamb.

164.—12. *Barker's.* There actually was an old bookstore in London by that name, and at one time the Lambs had lodgings above it.

164.—33. *corbeau.* Tailor's cant for black (literally, raven) goods.

165.—6. *Lionardo.* Mary Lamb had written a poem on this picture by Leonardo da Vinci.

165.—24. *Walton.*—In his *Complete Angler.*

166.—3. *Battle of Hexham*, etc. Actual plays and actors of the time, and favorites with Lamb.

168.—2. *Mr. Cotton.* The seventeenth-century poet, Charles Cotton, wrote:

> Then let us welcome the new guest
> With lusty brimmers of the best.

169.—12. *the great Jew R.* Nathan Meyer Rothschild (1777–1836), the famous banker.

169.—14. *tester.* Canopy.

169.—On the Popular Fallacy. 23. *found out long sixes.* invented candles.

170.—16. *in fresco.* in the dark.

170.—22. *Sherris.* Sherry wine.

171.—2. *Phoebus.* Phoebus Apollo, the sun-god and the god of poetry.

171.—14. *Morning Hymn.* Adam and Eve's in *Paradise Lost*, v, 153 ff.

171.—16. *Taylor.* Jeremy Taylor, the seventeenth-century divine, whose ornate prose was one of Lamb's delights.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

SELECTED READING LIST. *The Best of Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, Doran, 1923. *Hazlitt on English Literature*, ed. Jacob Zeitlin, Oxford Univ., 1913.—The standard complete edition is that of A. R. Waller and A. Glover, 12 vols., Dent, 1902, which has been supplemented by P. P. Howe's *New Writings of Hazlitt*, Secker, 1925. A revision of the complete edition is expected within two or three years.

The standard biography is P. P. Howe's, 8 vols., Secker, 1922; new edition, 1928.

Important criticisms are: Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, Smith, 1874; George Saintsbury, *Essays in English Literature*, Percival, 1890; Augustine Birrell, *William Hazlitt*, Macmillan, 1902; Jacob Zeitlin, Introduction to *Hazlitt on English Literature*, Oxford Univ., 1913; and W. P. Ker, *Collected Essays*, Macmillan, 1925.

172.—MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH POETS. In reading this famous account of Coleridge, bear in mind that it was written twenty-five years after the event. In 1798 Coleridge was opposed to Great Britain's war against France. By 1823 he had become a conservative in many respects, while Hazlitt continued a radical. This explains why H.'s general admiration for Coleridge is here occasionally intermixed with fault-finding, such as he would not have shown in 1798. Cf. such expressions as "our once-lov'd poet" (p. 176, l. 9), "his nose . . . small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done" (p. 177, l. 15); "instability of purpose" (p. 178, l. 20).

This reminiscence was first published in Leigh Hunt's radical journal, *The Liberal.*

172.—1. *W-m.* Wem.

173.—1. *like . . . Demogorgon.* Another way of saying "they impress me with an inexplicable awe,"—like the passage, quoted from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, ii, 294.

173.—21. The Latin name of Shropshire is Salopia.

173.—25. From Thomas Gray's *The Bard*, l. 28.

175.—21. *Crying in the wilderness.* John the Baptist.

175.—30. *banners.* The flags of Great Britain and her allies.

176.—23. *Jus Divinum.* The divine right (of kings), odious to H.

176.—32. *forehead.* his tongue being silent.

178.—27. *conceit.* extravagant fancy.

179.—27–31. Southey's *Vision* glorifying the late George III, and Byron's *Vision* (published by Murray) burlesquing it. The Bridge-Street Association opposed radical publications.

180.—HAMLET. H.'s general soundness as a critic is shown by the fact that although *Hamlet* has been learnedly investigated and thoughtfully discussed for more than a century since this essay was composed, there is little in H.'s interpretation of Hamlet's character that would be contradicted by the most competent modern Shaksperian scholars.

On the characteristically romantic attitude towards Shakspere, see, above, the note on Coleridge, p. 139, where the similar essay of Carlyle is cited. Hazlitt joins the chorus when he remarks that, although other authors may give fine imitations of nature, Shakspere gives us nature itself, (p. 182, ll. 22–26).

182.—1–3. Professor George Saintsbury, *History of Criticism*, iii, 258, calls this passage one of the high points in Shaksperian criticism.

182.—31. Is not this at least a faint anticipation of one of the most widely accepted modern interpretations of Hamlet,—Professor A. C. Bradley's, in *Shakesperean Tragedy*?

188.—ON FAMILIAR STYLE. Another essay to be commended to those who believe that the Romantics encourage the merely instinctive, impulsive, individual, vulgar, centrifugal, etc. Observe H.'s protest against Cobbett's notion that "the first word that occurs is always the best" (p. 192, l. 11); and against those who would "write at random" (p. 188, l. 22). The gist of his advice is to "steer a middle course" (p. 189, l. 14) between pompous diction and vulgar or technical.

189.—34. This is truer of Dr. Johnson's imitators than of Dr. Johnson himself, whose diction was as simple and direct as anyone's when he thought the subject demanded it.

190.—34. *Cum grano salis.* With a grain of salt, i.e., not unreservedly.

193.—2. *Lamb.* His archaisms are here justified only on the principle that no other style would sincerely express his own personality; they are therefore, in H.'s view, not imitative or artificial.

193.—29. *Well of native English.* Spenser's praise of Chaucer's diction (*Fairie Queene*, iv, ii, 32).

SIR WALTER SCOTT

SELECTED READING LIST. For selections from the poems, ed. J. C. Jordan, Macmillan, 1928. For selections from the Waverley Novels, ed. Arthur J. Grant, Macmillan, 1909.—The complete poems best in ed. H. E. Scudder, Houghton, 1900. The complete Waverley Novels best in ed. Andrew Lang, Macmillan, 1902–04.

The latest biography is by Louise S. Boas, *A Great Rich Man: the Romance of Sir Walter Scott*, Longmans, 1929; but the celebrated biography by J. G. Lockhart, despite its reticences, remains by far the best. The best Lockhart is that published by Houghton, 1901. An abbreviated Lockhart is published in Everyman's Library, Dent.

In the history of criticism there are few, if any, cases where the critical study and appreciation of an author has been so inadequate to his historical importance and intrinsic merit as in the case of Sir Walter Scott. There is at present no work which comprehensively sets forth his greatness as a poet and as a novelist. Relatively the most important criticisms are: J. C. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, Houghton, 1881; George Saintsbury, *Essays in English Literature: Second Series*, Scribner, 1895; George Saintsbury, *Sir Walter Scott*, Scribner, 1897; R. L. Stevenson, *A Gossip on Romance*, Scribner, 1887; C. A. Young, *The Waverley Novels*, MacLehose, 1907 (the best book on the subject); Arthur J. Grant, Introduction to selections from the Waverley Novels, Macmillan, 1909; Andrew Lang, Introductions to his editions of the Waverley Novels, Macmillan, 1902–04 (the best account of Scott's use of his sources); Maurice Hewlett, *Wiltshire Essays*, Oxford Univ., 1921.—For unsympathetic or hostile comments, see: John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, iv, 16, 1856, and *Fors Clavigera*, 31–34, 1873; W. D. Howells, *Criticism and Fiction*, Harpers, 1891; and Paul Elmer More, *Shelburne Essays*, iii, Putnam, 1905.

195.—LOCHINVAR. "The ballad of Lochinvar is in a very slight degree founded on a ballad called 'Katharine Janfarie.'"—Scott. The usual title for it is *Katharine Jaffray*. Read it in Childs's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, and consider the purpose and the value of Scott's changes.

Observe the galloping metre,—later used by Browning in *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent To Aix*.

196.—5. *brake.* thicket.

196.—18. *like the Solway.* i.e., violently, the Firth of Solway being noted for its powerful tides. Scott later described them in *Redgauntlet*, chap. iv.

197.—2. *galliard.* A lively dance for two persons.

197.—11. *scaur.* cliff. 197.—13. *Græmes.* Grahams.

197.—MARMION AND DOUGLAS. This scene of defiance between the English villain-hero Marmion and his turbulent host Douglas, Earl of Angus, is a passage typical of the spirited action of Scott's romances; and it may be sufficiently appreciated without a detailed knowledge of its context. The main point in the situation is that Douglas has received Marmion into his castle because Marmion is on an official mission, but Douglas will not countenance any suggestion of personal friendship between them.

The following annotations by Scott are characteristic illustrations of his scholarship and of his desire to be true to historical facts.

200.—2. *the flush of rage.* "This ebullition of violence in the potent Earl of Angus is not without its examples in the real history of the house of Douglas, whose chieftains possessed the ferocity with the heroic virtues of a savage state. The most curious instance occurred in the case of Maclellan, tutor of Bomby, who, having refused to acknowledge the pre-eminence claimed by Douglas over the gentlemen and Barons of Galloway, was seized and imprisoned by the Earl, in his castle of the Thrieve, on the borders of Kirkcudbright-shire. Sir Patrick Gray, commander of King James the Second's guard, was uncle to the tutor of Bomby, and obtained from the King 'a sweet letter of supplication,' praying the Earl to deliver his prisoner into Gray's hand. When Sir Patrick arrived at the castle, he was received with all the honor due to a favorite servant of the King's household; but while he was at dinner, the Earl, who suspected his errand, caused his prisoner to be led forth and beheaded. After dinner, Sir Patrick presented the King's letter to the Earl, who received it with great affectation of reverence; 'and took him by the hand, and led him forth to the green, where the gentleman was lying dead, and showed him the manner, and said, "Sir Patrick, you are come a little too late; yonder is your sister's son lying, but he wants the head: take his body, and do with it what you will." Sir Patrick answered again with a sore heart, and said, "My lord, if ye have taken from him his head, dispone upon the body as ye please": and with that called for his horse, and leaped thereon; and when he was on horseback, he said to the Earl on this manner, "My lord, if I live, you shall be rewarded for your labors, that you have used at this time, according to your demerits." At this saying the Earl was highly offended, and cried for horse. Sir Patrick, seeing the Earl's fury, spurred his horse but he was chased near Edinburgh ere they left him: and had not

been his led horse was so tried and good, he had been taken' (Pitscottie's *History*)."—Scott.

200.—29. *A letter forged.* "Lest the reader should partake of the Earl's astonishment and consider the crime as inconsistent with the manners of the period, I have to remind him of the numerous forgeries (partly executed by a female assistant) devised by Robert of Artois, to forward his suit against the Countess Matilda; which, being detected, occasioned his flight into England, and proved the remote cause of Edward the Third's memorable wars in France. John Harding, also, was expressly hired by Edward IV to forge such documents as might appear to establish the claim of fealty asserted over Scotland by the English monarchs."—Scott.

Despite this plea, the introduction of a forgery into this kind of tale has been almost universally deemed a blemish. Byron, in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 166 ff., scoffed at

> The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
> Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
> Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight.

201.—THE LADY OF THE LAKE. "The scene of the following poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire."—Scott.

"The ancient manners, the habits, and customs of the aboriginal race by whom the Highlands of Scotland were inhabited, had always appeared to me peculiarly adapted to poetry. The change in their manners, too, had taken place almost within my own time, or at least I had learned many particulars concerning the ancient state of the Highlands from the old men of the last generation. I had always thought the old Scottish Gael highly adapted for poetical composition. The feuds, and political dissensions, which, half a century earlier, would have rendered the richer and wealthier part of the kingdom indisposed to countenance a poem, the scene of which was laid in the Highlands, were now sunk in the generous compassion which the English, more than any other nation, feel for the misfortunes of an honorable foe."

SOLDIER, REST! *pibroch.* battle-music on bagpipe. *fallow.* pasture. *reveille.* awakening summons.

CORONACH. Sung by the women, lamenting the death of the chieftain.

203.—1. *correi.* A hollow in a hillside, where game hides.

203.—2. *cumber.* trouble (Cf. "encumbered").

203.—BRIGNALL BANKS. "The banks of the Greta [a river in Yorkshire], below Rutherford Bridge, abound in seams of grayish slate, which are wrought in some places to a very

great depth under ground, this forming artificial caverns, which, when the seam has been exhausted, are gradually hidden by the underwood which grows in profusion upon the romantic banks of the river. In times of public confusion, they might be well adapted to the purposes of banditti."—Scott. In the dialogue between the maiden and her lover, it is gradually disclosed to her that he is an outlaw.

205.—JOCK OF HAZELDEAN. The first stanza is from an old ballad, which in Childs's *Ballads* is entitled *John of Hazelgreen*.

205.—21. *ha'*. hall. 27. *managed*. trained.

206.—PROUD MAISIE. This ballad (from *The Heart of Midlothian*, chap. xlv) is sung by the crazed Madge Wildfire upon her death-bed.

207.—COUNTY GUY. From *Quentin Durward*, chap. iv. Supposed to be sung by a maiden in the days of chivalry. "The words," says Scott, "had neither so much sense, wit, and fancy, as to withdraw the attention from the music, nor the music so much of art as to drown all feeling of the words. The one seemed fitted to the other; and if the song had been recited without the notes, or the air played without the words, neither would have been worth noting. It is, therefore, scarcely fair to put upon record lines intended not to be said or read, but only to be sung."

County. Count, earl, or lord.

207.—BONNY DUNDEE. From Scott's forgotten play, *The Doom of Devorgoil*.

Dundee is John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, gallant soldier and supporter of a lost cause, much admired by Scott, who had depicted his character in *Old Mortality*. During the reigns of the Stuart kings Charles II and James II, Dundee persecuted the rebellious Scotch Dissenters. When the Stuart cause was lost, and James II fled to France, Dundee remained loyal, as described in the poem. Defying the "Lords of Convention," i.e., the Scottish Parliament, he left Edinburgh with a small escort, vainly attempted to persuade the Duke of Gordon to hold Edinburgh Castle for King James, raised an army in the Highlands, and led it to victory at Killiecrankie, in which battle he was mortally wounded. His exit from Edinburgh was not quite so dramatic as Scott imagined, but the poem is in general harmony with the temper and staunchness of Dundee.

208.—2. *backward*. in sign of alarm.

208.—3. *douce*. prudent (somewhat sarcastically).

208.—6. *sanctified*. So called because the Bow was a street mainly occupied by Dissenters or Covenanters, whom

their opponents thought ostentatiously and hypocritically devout.

208.—7. *Ilk carline, etc.* Every old woman was scolding and wagging her head.

208.—8. *young plants, etc.* The young Covenanters looked not unsympathetically.

208.—11. *crammed.* Mr. Stewart A. Robertson and Mr. S. M. Ellis have recently established the fact that in the first publication of the poem (in *The Christmas Box*, 1828) the reading was *pang'd*, i.e., "stuffed full." See *Times Lit. Suppl.*, Feb. 28, Mar. 7, Mar. 14, and Apr. 4, 1929. An obviously better rhyme, and almost certainly the correct reading.

208.—16. *cowls of Kilmarnock.* wearers of hooded garments, made in Kilmarnock, a town west of Edinburgh.

208.—17. *lang-hafted gullies.* long-handled knives.

208.—18. *close-heads.* The innermost ends of the blind alleys leading out of the causeway or main street.

208.—23. *Mons Meg.* Dundee is asking Gordon, commander of the castle, to turn the huge cannon called Meg, and supposed to have been made in Mons, Belgium, against the Covenanters.

208.—23. *marrows.* mates.

209.—2. *Where'er shall direct me, etc.* Wherever loyalty and bravery in the Stuart cause may require, for the Marquis of Montrose had been a valiant royalist leader, who was finally captured and executed by the Covenanters.

209.—8. *Duniewassals.* Highland gentlemen in the service of the chiefs.

209.—11. *barkened.* tanned with bark.

210.—GUY MANNERING. Mr. Bertram, laird (i.e., squire) of Ellangowan, having recently been appointed a magistrate, feels that he must enforce the law forbidding the harboring of gypsies.

210.—7. *lea ground and dingle.* pasture and wooded ravine.

210.—9. *baulks.* sloping uncultivated places.

210.—17. *pressgang.* Those who drafted men into the army.

210.—29. *aik.* oak. **211.**—2. *sovereign, etc.* cure for fever.

211.—20. *Adam Smith.* The famous economist.

211.—34. *potato bogle.* potato-scarecrow.

212.—4. *Maroons.* The gypsies.

212.—8. *Ne moveas, etc.* A pedant's way of saying: "Let sleeping dogs lie."

212.—17. *Martinmas.* The feast of St. Martin, November 11.

212.—33. *of the quorum, etc.* Alluding to Mr. Bertram's having been made one of the magistrates and the custodian of their records.

214.—1. *nae mair.* no more. 2. *cuddies.* donkeys.

215.—33. *elf-locks.* entangled locks.

216.—8. *blyther.* more cheerfully.

216.—8. *riven the thack, etc.* torn the thatch from seven cottages.

216.—10. *stirks in the shealings.* heifers in the gypsy-shelters.

216.—15. *sunkets.* delicacies. 19. *bields.* shelters.

216.—20. *tod and blackcock, etc.* fox and grouse upon the moors.

216.—29. *reise.* sapling.

216.—32. *Margaret of Anjou.* The unfortunate queen of Henry VI. Scott probably had in mind her denunciations of her enemies in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, I, v, 5.

217.—THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN. From chap. xxxvii. Jeanie Deans, whose sister Effie lies in Edinburgh under sentence of death for child-murder, has tramped on foot to London to pray for a pardon from Queen Caroline, and the Duke of Argyll has brought her before Her Majesty. The difficulty of Jeanie's bold effort is increased by the circumstance that the Queen has lately been angered by the unruliness of the Scotch, manifested in the Porteous riots. Capt. Porteous had ordered his troops to fire upon a crowd which had become excited at a public execution. More than a dozen persons having been killed and wounded, he was found guilty of murder; and when the Government respited him, a mob dragged him out of prison and lynched him.

218.—25. *cutty-stool.* A low but conspicuous stool in Scottish churches, upon which offenders against morality were condemned to sit. Lady Suffolk's reputation was none too good.

218.—33. *his hand at his chin.* The Duke and Jeanie had previously agreed that whenever she seemed to be saying the wrong things he should raise his hand to his chin.

219.—33. *hae sae.* have so.

220.—1. *haill.* whole.

220.—2. *whiles the cast.* sometimes a lift.

221.—1. *that unhappy man.* Capt. Porteous (see above).

221.—27. *puir.* poor. 35. *kend.* knew. 37. *ca'd.* called.

222.—13. *dune for oursells.* done for ourselves. 14. *maist.* most.

222.—18. *ae tow.* one rope.

JANE AUSTEN

SELECTED READING LIST. *The Novels of Jane Austen*, 5 vols., ed. R. W. Chapman, Oxford Univ., 2nd ed., 1926.

The standard biography is J. E. Austen-Leigh, *Memoir*, 1869; ed. R. W. Chapman, Oxford Univ., 1927.

Important criticisms are: Andrew Lang, *Letters to Dead Authors*, 1886; Austin Dobson, Prefaces to Jane Austen's novels, Macmillan, 1896; A. C. Bradley, *Essays and Studies*, English Association, ii, 1911; F. W. Cornish, *Jane Austen*, Macmillan, 1913; Leonie Villard, *Jane Austen: sa vie et son œuvre*, 1914, transl., Routledge, 1923; O. W. Firkins, *Jane Austen*, Holt, 1920; and Annette B. Hopkins, *Publ. Mod. Lang. Asso.*, June, 1925.

225.—3. *chaise and four.* carriage and four horses.
227.—5. *develop.* analyze.
237.—16. *pools at quadrille.* games of cards.
238.—17. *four per cents.* four per cent bonds.
240.—29. *elegant females.* well-bred women.
243.—4. *The horses were post.* They were hired horses.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

SELECTED READING LIST. Best selection from the poems, ed. Edward Dowden, Macmillan, 1895; from the prose, ed. Jacob Zeitlin, Macmillan, 1916. An attractive edition of the *Life of Nelson* is Emma Gollancz's, Dent, 1896. A selection from Southey's Letters is in the World's Classics, Oxford Univ., 1912.

The standard biography is Cuthbert Southey's, 6 vols., Longmans, 1849; but sufficient is Edward Dowden's, Macmillan, 1876.

For criticism, in addition to the introductions to the Dowden and the Zeitlin selections given above, see: William Haller, *The Early Life of Robert Southey*, Columbia Univ., 1917; Walter Graham, in *Philological Quarterly*, April, 1923; and Paul Kaufman, in *Modern Philology*, February, 1924.

252.—THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM. Old Kaspar lives at Blenheim, in Bavaria, Germany; where, in 1704, under the leadership of the Duke of Marlborough and the Austrian Prince Eugene, an allied army of English, Germans, Dutch, and Danes, defeated a numerically superior French and Bavarian force. Southey's poem is one of the best-known attacks upon the futility of war. In selecting the battle of Blen-

heim as an instance, he made a shrewd choice; for although the victory was a brilliant exhibition of military skill, the ultimate outcome of the war was that the defeated French achieved their purpose,—viz. the recognition of Philip of Anjou as King of Spain. A devil's advocate might retort to Southey, however, that although the immediate results of Marlborough's victories seemed disappointing, their ultimate consequences in enhancing the prestige and influence of Great Britain were fully worth the sacrifice. By way of contrast, Addison's poem in glorification of Blenheim, *The Campaign* (1704), should be read. The style is typical of what the young Romantics were practicing at this time (1798),—the expression of idealistic conceptions in a simple, an almost naïve, manner.

254.—The Life of Nelson. The best brief biography written in the romantic period. Nelson fell on October 21, 1805. Southey's *Life* appeared eight years later; but we should bear in mind that the overthrow of Napoleon had not yet been achieved at that time, and that Southey's purpose was to strengthen the courage and perseverance of British sailors and soldiers by recalling the sublime example of Nelson's character and prowess.

An admirable feature of Southey's style is that, unlike the "smart" biographical style fashionable today, it never directs attention to itself at the expense of the subject.

255.—13. *lee-line.* The line furthest from the direction whence the wind blows. The weather-line is the opposite.

255.—36. *Trafalgar.* Correctly accented on the last syllable, as in Byron's

> Oft did he mark the scenes of vanished war,
> Actium, Lepanto, fatal Trafalgar.

But the modern accent is usually on the second syllable.

255.—37. *under the lee.* A coast on the leeward side, i.e., on the side the wind is blowing towards, is always dangerous.

256.—4. *Villeneuve.* Commander of the French fleet.

256.—25. *England expects.* As first drafted, the signal read: "Nelson expects . . ." Who suggested the more superb "England expects . . ." seems to be unknown; but when Nelson heard it he said, "Certainly, certainly." This immortal sentence is often misquoted as "England expects every many *to do* his duty."

257.—7. *Mr. Beatty.* Southey had before him Beatty's account of Nelson's death, and in the first edition acknowledged his indebtedness thereto.

257.—28. *last infirmity.* the love of fame,—alluding to Milton's lines in *Lycidas*, 70–72:

> Fame is the spur which the clear spirit doth raise
> (That last infirmity of noble mind)
> To scorn delights, and live laborious days.

258.—8. *Spithead.* A stretch of water affording good anchorage, near the British naval base of Portsmouth.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

SELECTED READING LIST. *Selected Poems*, ed. L. Campbell, Macmillan, 1904. *Complete Poetical Works*, ed. J. Logie Robertson, Oxford Univ., 1907.

Best biography: J. C. Hadden, Anderson, 1899.

Criticism: George Saintsbury, *Essays in English Literature: Second Series*, Scribner, 1895: Arthur Symons, *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*, Dutton, 1909; Oliver Elton, *A Survey of English Literature: 1780–1830*, Macmillan, 1912.

258.—YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND. This should be compared with the following seventeenth-century ballad, by Martyn Parker, which is in part its source:

> Ye gentlemen of England
> That live at home in ease
> Ah! little do you think upon
> The dangers of the seas.
> Give ear unto the mariners,
> And they will plainly show
> All the cares and all the fears
> When the stormy winds do blow
> When the stormy winds do blow.
>
> If enemies oppose us
> When England is at war
> With any foreign nation,
> We fear not wound nor scar;
> Our roaring guns shall teach 'em
> Our valor for to know
> Whilst they reel on the keel,
> And the stormy winds do blow
> And the stormy winds do blow.
>
> Then courage all brave mariners,
> And never be dismayed;
> While we have bold adventurers,
> We ne'er shall want a trade:

Our merchants will employ us
To fetch them wealth we know;
Then be bold—work for gold,
When the stormy winds do blow
When the stormy winds do blow.

By what changes in the contents and in the diction has Campbell elevated the tone of the poem?

The poem was written in the early years of the conflict against Napoleon, when, as always, the retention of sea-power was Great Britain's crucial need.

259.—25. *meteor flag.* See, in any large dictionary, a colored picture of the British flag,—its design and hue suggesting a meteor.

259.—26. *terrific.* Meteors were regarded with dread.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

SELECTED READING LIST. *Selections*, ed. Sidney Colvin, Macmillan, 1882. *Selections from the Imaginary Conversations*, ed. F. A. Cavenagh, Oxford Univ., 1899. *Complete Works*, ed. T. E. Welby, Chapman and Hall, 1927–1930.

Best biography: John Forster, 2 vols., Chapman, 1869.

Important criticisms are: Sidney Colvin, *Landor*, Macmillan, 1878; Leslie Stephen, *Hours in A Library*, Putnam, 1879; George Saintsbury, *Essays in English Literature; Second Series*, Scribner, 1895; Ruth Goldmark, *Studies in the Influence of the Classics on English Literature*, Col. Univ., 1918; and S. T. Williams in *Publ. Mod. Lang. Asso.*, Dec., 1923.

261.—PERICLES AND ASPASIA. Not one of the *Imaginary Conversations*, but a prose fiction in the form of letters supposed to be written by the celebrated Greek statesman Pericles (fifth century B. C.), his mistress Aspasia, and their friends. The letters here selected are Nos. 69, 70, 173, 192, 194, 231, 234, and 235. Observe particularly the ideals of conduct animating these noble lovers, and the relative place of love and duty in their scale of values.

263.—7. The plague has broken out in Athens.

265.—15. *Reviewing the course of my life.* Pericles proceeds to name those whom he remembers,—viz., the greatest men of the greatest age of Greece: soldiers like Aristides and Miltiades; historians like Herodotus and Thucydides; philosophers like Empedocles, Protagoras, and Hippocrates; a sculptor like Phidias; and poets and dramatists like Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripedes.

THOMAS MOORE

SELECTED READING LIST. *Selected Poems*, ed. C. L. Falkiner, Macmillan, 1903. *Tom Moore's Diary: A Selection*, ed. J. B. Priestley, Camb. Univ., 1925. *Poetical Works*, ed. A. D. Godley, Oxford Univ., 1910.

Best biographies: A. J. Symington, Harper, 1880; Stephen A. Gwynn, Macmillan, 1905, 1924.

Criticisms: A. D. Godley's Introduction to edition mentioned above; George Saintsbury, *Essays in English Literature: First Series*, Scribner, 1890: C. W. Moulton, *Library of Literary Criticism*, v, 1910.

267.—1. *Tara's halls.* Tara, north-west of Dublin, was a stronghold of the ancient Irish kings.

LORD BYRON

SELECTED READING LIST. *The Shorter Byron*, ed. Ernest Rhys, Holden, 1927. *Lord Byron in His Letters*, ed. V. H. Collins, Scribners, 1927.—A book of selections, *The Best of Byron*, ed. Richard A. Rice, Nelson, is in preparation for the autumn of 1930.

The standard edition of the complete works is: *Poetry*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, 7 vols., *Letters and Journals*, ed. R. E. Prothero, 6 vols., Scribner, 1898–1904. Convenient one-volume editions of the poetry are published by Oxford Univ. Press, 1896; and by Houghton, 1905.

The best biography is Ethel C. Mayne's, Scribner, 2nd ed., 1924. The crucial problem of Byron's moral character is keenly analyzed in Sir John Charles Fox's *The Byron Mystery*, Richards, 1924.

Important criticisms are: Georg Brandes, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*, iv, ch. 17–21 (1875), Macmillan, 1901–05; Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism: Second Series*, Macmillan, 1888; Paul Elmer More, in *Atlantic Monthly*, Dec., 1898; also his Introduction to Byron's *Poems*, Houghton, 1905; J. F. A. Pyre, in *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1907; S. C. Chew, *Byron in England: His Fame and After-Fame*, Murray, 1924 (the history of Byron-criticism); and John Drinkwater, *The Pilgrim of Eternity*, Hodder, 1925.

270.—SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY. Inspired by his meeting for the first time his cousin, the beautiful Mrs. Wilmot, at an evening party. "When we returned, he desired Fletcher to give him a tumbler of brandy, which he drank at once to

Mrs. Wilmot's health. . . . The next day he wrote some charming lines upon her" (Wedderburn Webster; see B's Letters [1899] iii. 92, n.).

271.—STANZAS FOR MUSIC. "An event—the death of poor Dorset," says Byron, "and the recollection of what I had once felt, and ought to have felt now, but could not, set me pondering, and finally into the train of thought which you have in your hands." To Moore he wrote: "I pique myself on these lines as being the *truest*, though the most melancholy, I ever wrote." (*Letters;* March 8, 1816.)

272.—THE PRISONER OF CHILLON. Shelley and Byron visited the Castle of Chillon c. June 26, 1816. Since 1820 visitors to the dungeon have been shown Byron's name carved on the third column, but its authenticity is questionable. Byron began his poem within a day or two after his visit, while staying at Ouchy on Lake Geneva.

The historic prisoner of Chillon, François Bonivard (1493–1570), was a prelate in Geneva, then under the rule of Duke Charles III of Savoy. An ardent reformer and controversialist, he strove to make Geneva an independent republic. The Duke twice cast him into prison, the second time in violation of a promise of safe conduct. The second imprisonment, the subject of the poem, lasted from 1530 to 1535. To later ages Bonivard became a hero and martyr of liberty; and several traits in his actual character, which was morally far from perfect, were obscured in a legendary sanctification. In the eighteenth century Rousseau contributed much to his fame by laying the catastrophe of his famous novel, *La Nouvelle Hélöise*, near the castle of Chillon, and by remarking:

> It was there that François Bonivard was kept a prisoner for six years, . . . a man of rare merit, whose righteousness and fortitude sustained every test,—a friend of liberty, although a Savoyard; and tolerant, although a priest (Part vi, Letter 8, note).

Byron, as he himself later admitted, was imperfectly acquainted with the historical facts in the case. No brothers suffered with Bonivard (he had but two). Although his dungeon was foul enough, his assertion that it was "lower than the lake," was unwarranted, it being some six feet higher. Finally, upon his release, he cannot realistically be described as one who "had learned to love despair" and who "regained freedom with a sigh," his subsequent career being turbulent and strenuous.

See A. van Amstel, "The True Story of the Prisoner of Chillon," *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1900, pp. 821–829.

The poem, therefore, is best regarded not as an historical

account of the particular sufferer to whose name Byron attached it, but rather as an imaginative interpretation of what the martyrs of liberty have in general endured. And such is the history of human cruelty that, thus regarded, the poem contains no exaggerations.

273.—6. *banned.* An example of B.'s bold use of language. When he wrote, "banned" was exclusively used in the sense of "laid a curse upon." He here introduced the new sense, "prohibited."

273.—31. *meteor lamp.* will-o'-the-wisp.

275.—33. *Leman.* Geneva.

279.—18. *stood a stone.* Probably influenced by Dante's famous line, "I wept not; so all stone I felt within" (*Inferno*, xxxiii). This canto of the *Inferno*, with its horrible picture of the prisoner seeing his beloved sons die before his eyes, should be compared with Byron's poem. Are there not other borrowed features besides the present one?

281.—4. *solitary cloud.* Cf. Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud."

282.—5. *quiet of a loving eye.* Another Wordsworthian reminiscence; cf. W.'s "the harvest of a quiet eye."

284.—CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE. *Childe.* A kind of title prefixed to the name of the oldest son of a noble family until he became knighted or inherited his father's title.

Knowing that the public would assume that Childe Harold was Byron himself, the author protested in the preface (1811) of the first and second cantos as follows: "A fictitious character is introduced for the sake of giving some connection to the piece, which, however, makes no pretension to regularity. It has been suggested to me by friends, on whose opinions I set a high value, that in this fictitious character, Childe Harold, I may incur the suspicion of having intended some real personage: this I beg leave, once for all, to disclaim—Harold is the child of imagination, for the purpose I have stated. In some very trivial particulars, and those merely local, there might be grounds for such a notion; but in the main points, I should hope, none whatever."

This declaration has not been taken very seriously, Childe Harold obviously being the mouthpiece of his creator. In the later cantos (from which the selections are taken) the allusions to B.'s own life are obvious; and much of the power of the poem arises from intimately personal feelings and experiences.

285.—6. *the most unfit of men to herd with man.* A typical passage. Cf. *Manfred*, II, ii, 50–58:

From my youth upwards
My spirit walked not with the souls of men
Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes,
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh.

285.—29. *clay will sink.* flesh will cause to burn low.

286.—8. *Then came his fit again.* His mood returned. When Macbeth learns that Fleance has escaped, his fears return, and he says: "Then comes my fit again" (III, iv, 21).

286.—WATERLOO. Wellington and Bluecher's decisive victory over Napoleon, June 18, 1815. Byron visited the battle-scene (south of Brussels, Belgium) a year later. Like Hazlitt, B. admired Napoleon. One of the notable features of this passage is that it raises doubts as to whether anything good was actually achieved by the famous victory: "is Earth more free?" B. tauntingly asks; was it not a "king-making Victory," because in several nations it settled the sovereigns more firmly on their tyrannous thrones? (p. 286–7, ll. 30–11). Compare in our own day the poems, novels, and plays which interpret the victory of the Allies in the World War as entirely futile, of which shell-shocked literature this passage is a precursor.

Of the ball at Brussels on the eve of the battle, which is also the theme of a well-known passage in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (ch. xxx), an authentic description may be found in Mrs. J. R. Swinton's *Life of Georgiana, Lady de Ros* (1893), 122 ff.

287.—5. *pride of place.* Napoleon reached his height here.

287.—27. *Harmodius.* The assassin of a tyrant.

287.—LAKE LEMAN. Lake Geneva. Observe that the passage is not mere description. The general train of thought is that Childe Harold, having found the life of mankind sordid and senseless, seeks solitude and Nature,—Nature because her suggestions of the harmonious and divine are beautiful, and because her forces (such as lightning) are more expressive of his feelings than words can be.

289.—18. *could I wreak my thoughts.* Could I furiously throw my thoughts completely into expression, and thus rid myself of them.

289.—ROME. The theme is that of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, to which B. alludes in his notes

The first stanza is characteristic: who but Byron would associate his personal woes with the imperial woes of Rome?

290.—8. *Niobe.* The ultimate in sorrow; in Greek myth, the queen-mother whose twelve children were slain before her eyes.

290.—12. *contain no ashes.* The remains had been removed in 1780. There was much rifling of tombs and sepulchres.

291.—3. *him who humbled.* Napoleon.

291.—10. *Nourished in the wild.* On this conception of Washington in particular, and the Americans in general, see Thomas Day's *Desolation of America.*

291.—18. *deadly days, etc.* A swift and bilious review of recent history: first, the Reign of Terror; next, the imperial ambitions of France; and finally, the peace which strengthened despotic power. See the note on *Waterloo,* p. 286.

291.—24. *Freedom's banner . . . against the wind.* One of the sublimest metaphors in Byron, true to nature and to history, and prophetic also.

292.—1. *the North.* Great Britain.

292.—4. *one fair spirit.* his sister?

293.—9. *there let him lay.* A notoriously incorrect use of "lay." Attempts to regularize B.'s grammar by alleging that "lay" is the predicate of "The armaments" in the next line collapsed before the plain fact that B.'s manuscript shows a period after "lay."

293.—18. B.'s note on this passage is characteristic: "The gale of wind which succeeded the battle of Trafalgar destroyed the greater part (if not all) of the prizes—nineteen sail of the line—taken on that memorable day. I should be ashamed to specify particulars which should be known to all, did we not know that in France the people were kept in ignorance of the event of this most glorious victory in modern times, and that in England it is the present fashion to talk of Waterloo as though it were entirely an English triumph, and a thing to be named with Blenheim and Agincourt, Trafalgar and Aboukir. Posterity will decide; but if it be remembered as a skilful or as a wonderful action, it will be like the battle of Zama, where we think of Hannibal more than of Scipio. For assuredly we dwell on this action, not because it was gained by Blücher or Wellington, but because it was lost by Buonaparte—a man who, with all his vices and his faults, never yet found an adversary with a tithe of his talents (as far as the expression can apply to a conqueror) or his good intentions, his clemency or his fortitude. Look at his successors throughout Europe, whose imitation of the worst

parts of his policy is only limited by their comparative impotence, and their positive imbecility."

295.—DON JUAN. The libertine Juan, wrecked on a passage from Spain to Italy, has been thrown up on a coast infested by pirates.

300.—16. *Castlereagh.* Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, the conservative Foreign Secretary from 1812–1822 who was detested by the Liberals.

300.—26. *Sappho.* The earliest celebrated poetess of Greece.

301.—11. *Marathon.* Scene of a victory which freed Greece from Persian domination.

302.—16. *Thermopylæ.* The pass where the Spartan Leonidas defeated the Persian king Xerxes.

302.—25. *Turkish.* When this was written, Greece was subject to Turkey.

303.—12. *Polycrate.* He ruled in the days of the poet Anacreon, but he was a Greek, not a foreign, tyrant.

304.—3. *the Franks.* Any foreign ruler.

304.—DON JUAN IN ENGLAND. 7. *Banquo's glass.* In *Macbeth,* IV, Macbeth sees Banquo and his line as kings of Scotland.

305.—21. *Moscow . . Leipsic . . Mont Saint Jean.* Scenes of Napoleon's defeats.

305.—28. *Lowe.* Sir Hudson Lowe, governor of St. Helena during the captivity of Napoleon.

306.—11. *Boeotian.* Implies that Landor was dull.

306.—13. Contrast the tone of this stanza with Shelley's *Adonais.*

307.—24. *Centaur, Nessus garb.* burning.

308.—12. *Or Molu.* Brass made to look like gold.

309.—20. *bogle.* ghost.

310.—ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR. Written a few weeks before his death.

311.—13. *The Spartan . . . was not more free.* Free from selfish considerations. The Spartan, having done his duty to his country, being dead or wounded, is borne away upon his shield.

311.—16. *Think through whom.* Another allusion to his warlike ancestry.

312.—3. *myrtle and ivy.* Love and friendship.

JOHN KEATS

SELECTED READING LIST. A good inexpensive book of selections, containing all that the general reader desires, is

Sir Henry Newbolt's (Nelson).—The best complete edition of the poems, admirably annotated, is Ernest de Sélincourt's (Dodd, Mead), 5th ed., 1926. H. E. Scudder's edition (Houghton), 1899, contains Keats's letters; but in other respects de Sélincourt's is preferable.

The important biographies are: Sidney Colvin's (Scribner), 1917; and Amy Lowell's (Houghton), 1925. Which of these is the better, is a hotly disputed question. Miss Lowell's contains valuable new facts, but in soundness of judgment Colvin's is preferred by many experts.

There are two kinds of critics of Keats: (1) those who assume that he was (for better or worse) preoccupied with the creation of beauty; and (2) those who believe that he was also evolving a philosophy. The chief criticisms of the first school are: W. M. Rossetti, *Life of Keats* (Scott), 1887; P. E. More, *Shelburne Essays* (Putnam), iv, 1906; Arthur Symons, in the *Keats Memorial Volume* (Lane), 1921; and Miss Lowell. The tendency to recognize an intellectual content and purpose in Keats is best shown in Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (Macmillan), 1888; R. S. Bridges, Introduction to the Muses Library edition of Keats (Lawrence and Bullen), reprinted in *Collected Essays*, iv, 1929; Ernest de Sélincourt, Introduction and Notes to *Poems of John Keats* (Dodd, Mead), 1905 ff.; C. L. Finney, in *Philological Quarterly*, 1925; J. Middleton Murry, *Keats and Shakspere* (Oxford Univ.), 1925; and C. D. Thorpe, *The Mind of John Keats* (Oxford Univ.), 1926.

By far the best annotations on Keats are found in Professor Ernest de Sélincourt's edition of the poems (1926), to which I gratefully acknowledge indebtedness.

313.—Chapman's Homer. George Chapman's "loud and bold" Homer, as romantic as Pope's is classical, appeared in 1598–1616. To Keats, who knew no Greek, and to whom some of the finest passages in Chapman's translation were read by Charles Cowden Clarke in October, 1816, it was a revelation. In this sonnet he touched, for the first time, the sublime—especially in its close. The conception of the discoverer of the Pacific (actually not Cortez but Balboa) was drawn from Titian's portrait of Cortez and either from William Robertson's *History of America* or (more likely) from a note in Wordsworth's *Excursion* quoting the obscure William Gilbert's splendid sentence: "When he walks along the river of the Amazons, when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes, when he measures the long and watered savannah, or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant vast Pacific, and feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre, . . . his exaltation is not less than imperial."

314.—ENDYMION. The introduction declares the poet's purpose, "spite of despondence," to try to add one more to those "shapes of beauty" which, in nature and in literature, make life worth living.

314.—29. *Brake.* thicket.

315.—1. *grandeur of the dooms, etc.* Immortal rewards of the heroic.

315.—17. *fellowship with essence.* Intimate understanding of the inward nature of things, such as art and literature disclose. Keats regarded this passage as one of the most important statements of his faith.

316.—2. *oneness.* Harmony within ourselves and with the universe.

316.—7. *love and friendship.* This part of the complex theme shows the influence of Wordsworth: the true ideal is not one which severs us from humanity. In his letter to his publisher, enclosing these lines, K. said that they clarified in his mind the "gradations of happiness, and seemed to him very true and important." From this point onwards *Endymion* may be said to struggle with the problem of how to reconcile an unworldly ideal with a love for humanity.

316.—21. *like a pelican brood.* The pelican was fabled to nurture its young with its own blood.

317.—SOVEREIGNTY OF LOVE. The neo-classicists cite this passage, which praises love as of superior human interest to ambition, as an illustration of K.'s alleged effeminacy. It is not the whole of his philosophy; and in its context it is dramatically appropriate since Endymion is about to set forth on his quest for love.

318.—7. *close of Troilus.* Embrace of Shakspere's famous lovers, Troilus and Cressida.

318.—16. *what care, though owl, etc.* What do we care (in comparison with our interest in great love-stories) about History telling us that an owl (of good omen) alighted upon Themistocles' ship at a critical moment?

318.—20. *Ulysses tortured, etc.* Even adventures in Homer are of inferior interest. The Cyclops was Polyphemus, the giant who, glutted with human flesh and with wine, fell asleep; whereupon Ulysses plunged a burning stake into his eye.

318.—21. *Juliet.* Shakspere's, in the balcony.

318.—25. *Hero.* The Greek priestess, whose lover nightly swam the Hellespont (Musaeus, and Marlowe).

318.—25. *Imogen.* The faithful and long-suffering heroine of Shakspere's "Cymbeline."

318.—26. *Pastorella.* An ill-used maiden in Spenser's *Fairie Queene*, vi, 2.

318.—28. *Fearfully, etc.* The very fact that Love is a sublime theme causes Keats, in his modesty, to fear he may fail.

318.—31. *Without one muse's smile.* I believe this signified his own doubts as to whether he had as yet been truly inspired, rather than the frown of the critics upon his 1817 volume of poems.

318.—33. *chaffing.* chafing.

319.—The Eve of St. Agnes. The basic source of the story K. probably took from the episode of Biancofiore and her lover Florio, in Boccaccio's prose romance *Il Filocopo* (H. N. McCracken, *Mod. Phil.*, Oct., 1907); but he elevated the quality of the passion. In the source the maiden's desire is for the actual presence of her lover, and it is aroused by the amorous chatter of her nurse; in place thereof K. substituted the belief that on St. Agnes' eve a maiden may behold a vision of her future husband. He derived many details in the setting and in the characterizations from Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (Martha H. Shackford, *Publ. Mod. Lang. Asso.*, 1921) and the general Gothic tradition.—On indebtedness to Scott, see John C. Jordan, in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, Jan., 1928.

Contrast the manner of relating the action with that of Scott in *Lochinvar* (above, p. 195), and compare the descriptions with those in Coleridge's *Christabel* p. 49.

321.—12. *amort.* As if dead, unresponsive.

321.—13. *St. Agnes' lambs.* On the saint's day, two lambs were brought to the altar at Mass as an offering. Their wool was afterwards woven by the nuns (see below, p. 322, l. 28).

323.—3. *a witch's sieve.* A sieve so enchanted that water will not run through it.

324.—21. *Merlin.* A wizard in Arthurian story. He owed his existence to a fiend, and paid his debt by deeds of evil deceit.

324.—23. *cates.* Dainties.

326.—5. *gules.* Red colors (from the stained glass).

326.—28. *clasped like a missal, etc.* Shut in as safely as a prayer book, with its clasps, in a heathen land.

328.—15. *La belle dame.* Anticipating the title of his later poem, below, p. 339.

330.—9. *Rhenish . . . mead.* Wine from the Rhine country, and mead (fermented honey and malt).

331.—Ode to a Nightingale. The contrast is between the dreariness of ordinary life and that world of beauty which the haunting loveliness of its song suggests.

331.—11. *Lethe-wards.* into forgetfulness.

331.—22. *Hippocrene.* A fountain, the waters of which inspired poets.

332.—2. *youth . . . dies.* Probably an allusion to the death of K's brother a few months previously, and perhaps to his own precarious health.

332.—6. *not charioted, etc.* Wine, first resorted to (stanza 2) for relief from the oppressiveness of life, is now rejected in favor of poetry.

332.—27. *Darkling.* In the dark.

333.—10. *Ruth.* In the Bible.

333.—Ode on a Grecian Urn. In nature and life, the beautiful fades away; in art it never dies.

Not one single urn, but several ancient vases and sculptures, were K's models for the descriptions.

334.—9. *sensual.* The ear of sense, contrasted with the spirit.

335.—4. *brede.* Embroidery.

335.—7. *tease.* Take away our worried thinking.

335.—12. *Beauty is truth.* In a letter to Bailey, K. wrote: "What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth." The difficulty of this paradox will be lessened if one bears in mind that to Keats the beauty of anything lay in its manifestation of its essential character. See the note on "fellowship with essence," above.

336.—Mermaid Tavern. Favorite tavern of authors such as Ben Jonson, Sir Walter Raleigh, possibly Shakspere, etc., c. 1600.

336.—27. *Canary wine.* A dry Spanish wine, made in the Canary islands.

337.—2. *bowse.* To booze, to drink greedily.

337.—To Autumn. Professor de Sélincourt regards this as K's "last work of full and conscious power," and wishes that K. "had been spared the agony of mind which can be read in the fevered attempts at self-expression" in the rest of his works.

339.—La Belle Dame Sans Merci. The beautiful lady without pity. In editions of Chaucer there used to be published a translation, mistakenly attributed to him, of a poem by this title by the French medieval poet Alain Chartier; but K. is indebted to it for almost nothing except the title. What debt there is, is chiefly to Coleridge and to William Browne.

As usual, I give in the text the poet's final version; but since some critics consider K's first version superior, I add it here, for purposes of comparison and discussion:

O what can ail thee, knight at arms,
Alone and palely loitering?

The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing!

O what can ail thee, knight at arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful, a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets, too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw, all day long;
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
"I love thee true."

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore;
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed, ah woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamt,
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death pale were they all,
Who cried, "La belle dame sans merci
Thee hath in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapèd wide—
And I awoke, and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering;
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

339.—19. The "wretched wight's" answer begins here.

341.—THE FALL OF HYPERION. The poet passes from the garden where he "ate deliciously" (p. 341, l. 19–p. 342, l. 9), after the enchanted draught (p. 342, ll. 10–28), through the richly stored temple (p. 342, l. 29–p. 343, l. 18), to the altar, where the true nature of poetry is disclosed to him (p. 342, l. 20–p. 347, l. 2). It is an allegory of the stages in the highest development of human character. (Compare it with Wordsworth's ages of man,—for similarities in substance, and contrasts in style). The garden is the youthful period of merely sensuous delight; the temple, that of knowledge, art, and philosophy, serves the period of intellectual curiosity, in which likewise one may wander purposeless; the altar, that of inspired truth and unselfish dedication, marks the hour when true self-knowledge is attained.

K. felt that up to this time his work had been too largely that of a dreamer, a self-indulgent wanderer in the garden and through the temple, too detached from his fellow beings and of too little service to them. (This self-condemning opinion was either entirely mistaken or a considerable exaggeration, but it was sincerely and strongly held.) He imagines that at the altar he is given a last opportunity to rise to a higher understanding of a true poet's functions, and by a most painful effort he succeeds in mounting the first step (p. 344, ll. 3–30). He is rewarded by new strength, and by the disclosure to him through the prophetess Moneta of the secret of great poetry,—its sympathy with human suffering, a sympathy which dreamers and self-worshippers [Byron] lack (p. 344, l. 31–p. 346, l. 33).

After this prelude, the poet is privileged, under Moneta's guidance, to behold the Fall of Hyperion, one of Saturn's Titans, who, when the action of the poem begins, is still the ruler of the sun, but who is to be overthrown by Apollo. In K.'s view, Hyperion fell because he was a god of mere power. Apollo won because he was a god of enlightenment, of beauty, and of beneficence to mankind. Of this portion of the poem, a fragment (883 lines, in a little over two books)

had already been written, but in the style of a Miltonic epic, a style which K. came to regard as too imitative, and also as too objective to permit of that amplitude of interpretation which he desired.

342.—17. *soon-fading.* Possibly meaning that the califs "faded," i.e., "murdered" their enemies quickly, or that (by assassins using poison) they themselves died soon one after the other.

343.—9. *some.* Misprint for "zone"?

343.—30. *mid-day.* Probably a misprint for "mid-May" (*Times Lit. Suppl.*, May 24, 1924).

345.—7. *None can usurp, etc.* Shows the influence not only of Wordsworth but also (see A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 242) of Shelley's Preface to "Alastor."

345.—27. *canst thou.* canst thou do.

346.—10–33. *Majestic shadow, etc.* This passage, highly important for an understanding of K.'s philosophy, was unfortunately omitted in the first edition.

346.—31. *careless Hectorers.* This attack on Byron regrettably lowers the noble tone of the poem.

349.—8. *Deep in the shady.* The first version of the poem began at this point.

351.—9. *scorches.* Possibly Keats wrote "scourges."

356.—The Last Sonnet. 4. *Eremite.* hermit, devotee of Nature.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Selected Reading List. *Selections*, ed. Sir Henry Newbolt, Nelson, 1910.—*Complete Poetical Works*, in one volume, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford Univ., 1907.—*Complete Works*, 10 vols., ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, Julian edition, Scribner, 1926–29.

The standard biography is Walter E. Peck's, 2 vols., Houghton, 1927.

Important criticisms are: Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism; Second Series*, Macmillan, 1888; Francis Thompson, *Shelley*, Scribner, 1908; A. T. Strong, *Three Studies in Shelley*, Oxford Univ., 1921; Mrs. Olwen W. Campbell, *Shelley and the Unromantics*, Scribner, 1924; and M. T. Solve, *Shelley: His Theory of Poetry*, Univ. of Chicago, 1928.—On Shelley's use of sources, see Daniel J. MacDonald, *The Radicalism of Shelley*, Catholic Educ. Press, 1912; Walter Graham, in *Publ. Mod. Lang. Asso.*, Dec., 1925; and Carl H. Grabo, in *Philol. Quart.*, April, 1927.—Anti-Shelleyean criticism is exemplified

by P. E. More, *Shelburne Essays*, vii, Putnam, 1910; and by G. R. Elliott, in *Publ. Mod. Lang. Asso.*, June, 1922.

On the controversies regarding Shelley's character and works, see J. W. Beach, "Latter-Day Critics of Shelley," *Yale Review*, July, 1922; and N. I. White, "The Beautiful Angel and his Biographers," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Jan., 1925.

358.—Hymn to Intellectual Beauty. Intellectual, or ideal, Beauty is an immortal power which we never behold, but the existence of which is suggested to us by those actual phenomena which it creates, and which in "studious zeal and love's delight" (p. 360, l. 16) we come to know and experience. These phenomena, however, fade and die sooner or later; they visit us with "inconstant wing"; they lack the eternal reality of the ideal beauty.—The general conception is Plato's (*Symposium*, 211–212).

359.—25. *I sought for ghosts, etc.* The contrast is between vainly seeking for supermundane beings which have no existence and obtaining glimpses of "thy shadow" (p. 360, l. 9), i.e., of the divine reality of beauty.

361.—Ozymandias. S. and Horace Smith agreed to enter into a sonnet-writing competition, the subject being a passage they had been reading together in the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, which related that the largest statue in Egypt bore the following inscription: "I am Ozymandias, king of kings; if anyone wishes to know what I am and where I lie, let him surpass me in some of my exploits." Observe that S. has intensified the boast, and has imagined that the sculptor ("the hand that mocked") would dare to mock. With the proud utterance of Ozymandias, compare some of the insanely arrogant speeches of the former Emperor of Germany before his downfall, also those of some modern rulers whom the gods have not yet destroyed.

361.—Stanzas Written in Dejection. Ill health and loneliness helped to induce this mood.

362.—26–7. Prophetic?

363.—Ode to the West Wind. In the Mediterranean lands strong winds from the West presage the coming of Winter. Shelley, once "tameless, and swift, and proud," like the West Wind, but of late despondent, prays that the spirit of that Wind may re-animate him and may bear his message (the Spring that shall succeed Winter) throughout mankind.

364.—18. *Mænad.* A priestess or devotee of Bacchus, god of wine and revelry.

365.—4. *pumice.* of volcanic lava. *Baiæ.* near Naples.

365.—12. *know thy voice.* S. adds a note stating that

submarine vegetation is affected by the changes of the seasons.

366.—9. *autumnal tone.* Is S.'s spirit really autumnal? See the last line.

366.—12. *my dead thoughts.* They are vital, but in his depressed state of mind seem temporarily lifeless to him.

366.—The Indian Serenade. **367.**—5. *champak.* a kind of magnolia.

367.—Prometheus Unbound. The selection is the passage, at the end of Act III, in which is announced the freedom of mankind from the tyranny of force,—mankind in the new era not being without passions, but ruling them in self-control.

368.—The Cloud. The best way to appreciate the beauty of this poem is, remembering it, to watch the clouds through the four seasons.

369.—17. *rack.* broken clouds.

370.—31. *cenotaph.* tomb.

371.—To a Skylark. Compare this with Wordsworth's sonnet, p. 128. Which is the more objective?

371.—24. *silver sphere.* evening star.

373.—16. *the fountains.* the inspiration.

373.—28. *more true.* Mortals fear death: the sky-lark's song is so happy that it seems not to.

374.—Adonais. An elegy on the death of John Keats. No great English poet has a nobler memorial than this; and few elegies in any language have a worthier subject.

Shelley was acquainted with Keats, but not intimately; and he was moved to utter this tribute, not merely by personal friendship, but by just admiration of Keats's poetry and by consciousness of what Poesy had lost by his early death. To these sound motives was, unhappily, added another, one which did not rest upon as true a foundation in fact,—Shelley's indignation against the anonymous hostile reviewer in the *Quarterly* of April, 1818, the savagery of whose attack upon Keats's poem Shelley erroneously believed to have caused the young poet's death. Hence we hear, amid the otherwise lovely elegiac tones of *Adonais*, harsh notes in such epithets as "deaf and viperous murderer," "vulture," "nameless worm," "carrion kites," and "obscene ravens." Shelley's introduction of invective into an elegy might be defended by the precedent set in a famous passage in Milton's *Lycidas*,—

> such as for their bellies' sake
> Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold,—

but the defence would be stronger if the object of Shelley's indignation had been as actual as that of Milton's. On

the other hand, although no reviewer was guilty of murdering Keats, Shelley was fully justified in denouncing the failure of the world to recognize gratefully his genius.

The first edition of *Adonais* was printed at Pisa, Italy. Shelley's feelings at the time find characteristic expression in his preface, as follows:

"It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modeled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion* as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

"John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the [23rd] of [Feb.], 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now moldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

"The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in *The Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

"It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates[1] is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated,

[1] Henry Hart Milman, who had written several romantic dramas and poems. It may be added that Shelley suspected him to be the author of the "murderous" review. The actual author was John Wilson Croker, who may be said to have met his Nemesis when Macaulay reviewed his edition of Boswell's *Johnson* and dealt with him as he had dealt with Keats.

with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

"The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!"

The Greek pastoral poets Moschus and Bion (third century A.D.), of whom Shelley was fond, and of whom he translated some fragments, are occasionally mentioned as "the sources" of *Adonais*. They furnished, indeed, some of the pastoral conventions and descriptive touches. The extent of their contributions may be judged by comparing with the poem the following passages:

> "This kiss will I treasure, even as thyself, Adonis, since, ah ill-fated, thou art fleeing me, thou art fleeing far, Adonis, and art faring to Acheron, to that hateful

king and cruel, while wretched I yet live, being a goddess, and may not follow thee! . . . For why, ah overbold, didst thou follow the chase, and, being so fair, why wert thou thus overhardy to fight with beasts? . . . He reclines, the delicate Adonis, in his raiment of purple, and around him the Loves are weeping, and groaning aloud, clipping their locks for Adonis. And one upon his shafts, another on his bow is treading, and one hath loosed the sandal of Adonis, and another hath broken his own feathered quiver, and one in a golden vessel bears water, and another laves the wound, and another from behind him with his wings is fanning Adonis."—Bion, *Lament for Adonis.*

"Ye flowers, now in sad clusters breathe yourselves away. Now redden, ye roses, in your sorrow, and now wax red, ye wind-flowers; now, thou hyacyinth, whisper the letters on thee graven, and add a deeper *ai ai* to thy petals; he is dead, the beautiful singer. . . . Ye nightingales that lament among the thick leaves of the trees, tell ye to the Sicilian waters of Arethusa the tidings that Bion the herdsman is dead. . . . And Echo in the rocks laments that thou are silent, and no more she mimics thy voice. And in sorrow for thy fall the trees cast down their fruit, and all the flowers have faded. . . . Poison came, Bion, to thy mouth, thou didst know poison. To such lips as thine did it come, and was not sweetened. What mortal was so cruel that could mix poison for thee, or who could give thee the venom that heard thy voice? Surely he had no music in his soul."—Moschus, *Lament for Bion.*

The chief "source" is commonly not mentioned, perhaps because it is so obvious,—viz., Keats's own poems. To Shelley, Keats survived in what he had created, and what he had created appeared to deck his bier.—

> All he had loved, and molded into thought,
> From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,
> Lamented Adonais.

To those who have just been reading Keats, therefore, *Adonais* will again and again afford the pleasure of recognition.

The sources of the philosophy of the poem are Platonic and, despite the absence of expressed faith in personal immortality, Christian.

374.—1. *Adonais.* The name is normally Adonis,—that of the youth whom Venus loved and who was slain by a wild boar. (To Shelley, the boar was the critic.) Various explanations for S.'s form of the name have been suggested, none completely convincing. The best seems that of Professors Dixon and Grierson (*English Parnassus*, Oxford Univ. Press): "Adonais is just a modification of Adonis intended to suggest that Keats was as dear to Urania, the Goddess of Heavenly Love and Muse of high poetry, poetry that quickens in men's souls the love of liberty (notice the poets with whom Shelley associates Keats,—Milton and Lucan, as well as Sidney and Chatterton), as Adonis was to Aphrodite."

375.—2. *obscure compeers.* hours not as notable as that in which Keats died.

375.—12. *one.* Echo. Keats's sad Echo.

375.—26. *He died.* Milton, at whose death his cause seemed lost, owing to the Restoration of the Stuart kings and the reaction against Puritanism (alluded to in 376.—3–5).

376.—11. *tapers . . suns . . sublime.* The threefold contrast is between (a) talented poets who did not attempt work beyond their powers, and therefore survived, (b) over-ambitious poets who perished, and (c) geniuses struck down before maturity.

376.—19. *a pale flower.* the basil in Keats's *Isabella.*

376.—22. *extreme.* last. 26. *Capital.* Rome.

377.—2. *Come away.* Descend from Heaven to the chamber of Keats.

377.—13. *Hunger.* Corruption.

378.—13. *anadem.* garland.

378.—16. *stem.* oppose, put away. 21. *wit.* intellect.

379.—1. *clips.* embraces.

380.—11. *Phoebus.* Apollo, who loved the youth Hyacinth, and who caused the flower to spring up, after Hyacinth's death, from his blood.

380.—16. *nightingale.* Alluding to Keats's *Ode* (above, p. 331).

381.—5. *brere.* briar.

381.—22. *dies.* is annihilated.

381.—22. *that alone.* the mind, the soul.

381.—24. *intense atom.* the mind, the soul.

381.—25. *quenched . . in . . repose.* falls asleep, and to common sense appears to be dead.

382.—6. *death, who lends, etc.* To melancholy perception, seeing that billions are dead and comparatively few alive, Death seems the capitalist who lends, and Life the borrower.

382.—18. *the fading Splendor.* Urania.

383.—8. *wounded, etc.* Alluding to the world's rejection of genius.

384.—1. *heartless breast.* She has given her heart to Keats.

384.—23. *the Pythian.* the Apollo, i.e., Byron, who had attacked reviewers in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). It was hardly true that thereafter the reviewers "tempted no second blow."

385.—12. *Pilgrim of Eternity.* Byron, who in *Childe Harold* had spoken of "wanderers o'er Eternity." Shelley had received a letter from him, dated April 26, 1821, in which he wrote: "I am very sorry to hear what you say of Keats,—is it actually true? I did not think that criticism had been so killing. Though I differ from you essentially in your estimate of his performances, I so much abhor all unnecessary pain that I would rather he had been seated on the highest peak of Parnassus than have perished in such a manner." See his rather contemptuous remarks in *Don Juan*, above.

306.—13. This passage makes it difficult to regard Byron as a very sorrowful mourner.

385.—16. *Ierne sent the sweetest lyrist.* Ireland sent Thomas Moore. He had no special claim to a place here.

385.—19. *of less note.* i.e., than Byron and Moore.

385.—19. *one frail Form.* Shelley himself.

385.—24. *Actæon-like.* Because Actæon could not resist gazing upon Diana bathing, he was changed into a stag and hunted to death. Even so Shelley had had glimpses of Nature's secrets, which left him a prey to unrest.

386.—3. *pardlike.* leopard-like.

386.—23. *in another's fate now wept his own.* Shelley felt that both he and Keats were ill-used by the world.

386.—24. *accents of an unknown land.* A passage of which the meaning is disputed. Perhaps "in English, a tongue unknown to the Greek gods"; or "in English, a tongue strange to the land where Keats is buried."

387.—5. *Cain's or Christ's.* This daring phrase signifies that the world has branded with shame not only evildoers but also saviors. The passage aroused such horrified protests as the following (from the *Literary Gazette*, December 8, 1821):

"Memorable and ferocious blasphemy! . . . What can be said to the wretched person capable of this daring profanation? The name of the first murderer—the accursed of God—brought into the same aspect and image with that of the Savior of the World! We are scarcely satisfied that even to quote such passages may not be criminal."

387.—6. *What softer voice, etc.* Leigh Hunt, a better chosen mourner than Byron or Moore.

387.—24. *thou.* the reviewer excoriated in the preceding stanza.

388.—17. *he is not dead, etc.* These two stanzas, expressing the Christian paradox that a worldly life is death, are the sublimest in the poem.

389.—24. *that Power.* God.

390.—5. *the one Spirit's plastic stress, etc.* A notable assertion of the romantic faith that the Ideal struggles to mold the reluctant actual into forms as near perfection as possible.

390.—19. *the dead.* the masters of literature illumine the problems of youth.

390.—21. *unfulfilled renown.* They died so young that the fame which their work promised was not fully attained. Chatterton died at seventeen; Sir Philip Sidney, the Elizabethan poet and author of the *Arcadia*, fell in battle at thirty-two; and Lucan, an epic poet in the days of Nero, committed suicide to avoid a shameful death, at twenty-six. Shelley himself was to die at twenty-nine.

391.—16. *Fond wretch, etc.* The wretch who foolishly is sorry for Keats because Keats is dead, is in this obscure stanza asked to fly in imagination through the universe in order to realize what a minute particle he is. And if he takes a hopeful interest in life, he had better make it a light-hearted sort of hope, lest he be too bitterly disappointed.

392.—13. *slope of green access.* Keats's grave. See Shelley's preface. S.'s son, William, was buried there in 1819.

394.—7. *as each are.* according to the respective power each has to reflect the Heavenly Beauty (the One).

395.—Worlds on Worlds. 396.—11. *The Powers, etc.* The flight of the pagan gods at the birth of Christ is one of the themes of Milton's sublime *Ode on the Nativity.*

396.—The World's Great Age. Based on the ancient idea that the history of the Universe proceeded in cycles, and that after the present era a new beginning would be made, with a second Golden Age even lovelier than the first.

397.—9. *Oh, write no more.* It is well that Greece in her second Golden Age shall have again, in brighter forms, its lovely scenes, beautiful myths, and great heroes; but let her not know of another war, even if death must still be in that age, even if a Sphinx still must punish by death those who cannot guess her riddles.

397. —23. *One who rose.* Christ.

LEIGH HUNT

SELECTED READING LIST. Selections, ed. J. H. Lobban, Macmillan, 1909: also ed. Ed. Storer, Chicago, 1913.

Biographies by C. W. Monkhouse, Scott, 1893; and by R. B. Johnson, Sonnenschein, 1896. One by E. C. Blunden is said to be in preparation.

For criticism, see: George Saintsbury, *Essays in English Literature: First Series*, Scribner, 1890; and Barnette Miller, *Leigh Hunt's Relations with Byron, Shelley, and Keats*, Columbia Univ., 1910.

403.—ABOU BEN ADHEM. Hunt quotes the anecdote on which he based this poem, from D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1697). In the source Abou Ben Adhem is represented as asking the angel, "Pray set me down as one who loves those that love God." Hunt's modification of the restrictive clause is perhaps significant.

403.—19. RONDEAU. Jenny is said to be Mrs. Thomas (Jane) Carlyle, on an occasion when Hunt announced that the publishers had accepted one of Carlyle's works.

404.—KEATS'S POETRY. **405.**—18. *morbidity*. The alleged instance is Porphyro's faintness (see above, p. 326, 11). Do you agree with this opinion?

407.—2. *Gifford*. William Gifford, the critic, long mistakenly believed the author of the hostile article on *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review*, April, 1818. See above, the introductory note on Shelley's *Adonais*, p. 477.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

SELECTED READING LIST. *Selections*, ed. M. H. Turk, Ginn, 1902; or ed. W. R. Ridley, Oxford Univ., 1927. The latter includes essays on De Quincey by Leslie Stephen and Francis Thompson.—*Collected Writings*, 14 vols, ed. David Masson, 2nd. ed., Macmillan, 1896–97.

Biography by David Masson, Macmillan, 1881.

For criticism see, besides the above: George Saintsbury, *Essays in English Literature; First Series*, Scribner, 1890; and C. T. Winchester, *A Group of English Essayists*, Macmillan, 1910.

To appreciate De Quincey's prose, you should read at least some of these selections aloud,—e.g., *Levana*.

408.—PLEASURES OF OPIUM. **409.**—8. *Trophonius*. Those

who consulted this oracle (in Bœotia, Greece) returned from the cave dejected.

409.—25. *Behmenism, quietism, etc.* Various mystical cults which belittled common sense and rationalizing and exalted religious contemplation and spiritual vision.

409.—27. *Sir H. Vane.* Milton's contemporary, Sir Henry Vane, (see his sonnet on him); who was Governor of Massachusetts in 1636, and who took a tolerant attitude towards the persecuted religious enthusiast, Anne Hutchinson.

410.—22. *wrongs unredressed, etc.* Wordsworth, *Excursion*, iii, 374.

410.—30. *Hekatompylos.* Thebes.

412.—LEVANA. Jean Paul Richter gave to his *Erziehungslehre* (*Doctrine of Education*, 1807) the title *Levana.*

Which of the three Ladies of Sorrow do you think akin to Byron's melancholy?

414.—9. *on the foundation.* holding a scholarship.

415.—7. *the mighty abstractions, etc.* A passage which should be called to the attention of the neo-classics who allege that the Romantics are pre-occupied with their individual sorrows.

416.—11. *Rama . . . Rachel.* See *Jeremiah*, xxxi, 15, and Matthew, ii, 16.

418.—30. *a key.* that she may gain entrance into men's dwellings.

419.—LITERATURE OF KNOWLEDGE. Observe that, in De Quincey's conception, real literature (the "literature of power") is not merely what moves you, but what moves you to "sympathy with truth" and to "sympathy with the infinite" (p. 420, l. 34, p. 421, l. 22).

423.—9. *quamdiu bene se gesserit.* as long as it may wear well.

1708

1708